

PRESS OF
BRANDOW PRINTING COMPANY
ALBANY, N. Y.

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

*Centennial Committee, First Methodist Episcopal Church,
Schenectady, N. Y.:*

DEAR BRETHREN:—At a special meeting of the Official Board, held on November 24th, the following resolution was introduced by the Hon. J. B. Graham, President of the Board of Trustees, and unanimously adopted:

“In view of the announcement made by the Centennial Committee of this Board that they have completed the preparation of the history of this church, and that the book is now in the hands of the printer, with the promise of its appearance early next month, we consider this the proper time to put ourselves on record in recognition of their services, extending over more than a year. In addition to collecting material and writing the history, they have, during this time, arranged and carried into successful execution, our ten days’ celebration last May, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of this church. The character of their work, which was brought to a completion the past week, has been such as to merit the approval of this Board, of our church membership as a whole, and of every one interested in the Methodism of our city;

“Therefore be it resolved, that we extend a vote of thanks to our Centennial Committee for the splendid work done, requesting them that a copy of this resolution, signed by the secretary of the Board, be published in the forthcoming centennial volume.”

J. R. BOWMAN,
Secretary.

SCHENECTADY, N. Y., Nov. 25th, 1907.



JOHN WESLEY

The Frontispiece of all Methodism

(Engraved from Foster's portrait; Copyright, 1900; By permission of Methodist
Social Union, Toronto, Ont.)

CENTENNIAL HISTORY

OF THE

First Methodist Episcopal Church

SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

PART FIRST

From the Preaching of Thomas Webb, 1766, to the
Centennial Year of Methodism, 1839.

By William C. Kitchin, Ph.D.

PART SECOND

From the Centennial Year of Methodism, 1839, to
the Centennial Year of this Church, 1907.

By Benjamin H. Ripton, Ph.D., LL.D.

PART THIRD

Transactions and Addresses of the Centennial Cele-
bration, May 2nd-12th, 1907

Edited by Fred Winslow Adams, D.D.

Published by the Official Board of the Church
1907

"LEST WE FORGET"

"We do not envy those who are to come after us in their enjoyment of the prosperity of Methodism,—as well might a father disinherit his children, for fear that they should actually possess that which he had spent his whole life to lay up for them. We would only say to them that it has been by preaching in the Spirit, praying in the Spirit, and living in the Spirit that the great work has been accomplished; and it is by the same Spirit that the Church must be sustained.

"Our early Methodists were distinguished by their clear views of Scripture doctrine and Christian experience, while their holy lives and their conscientious self-denial of worldly pleasures made them a standing reproof to their giddy, thoughtless and fashionable neighbors. The same is as essential to Methodism now as it was then. At all times, in all places and under all circumstances, the words of the apostle are applicable to all, 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds; that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.'

"On the other hand, let those who talk of and desire again to see old-fashioned Methodism, be careful that they do not mistake the shadow for the substance, the circumstances of Methodism for Methodism itself. The true spirit of old-fashioned Methodism does not depend on the places or circumstances of worship, whether in private houses, school houses and barns, or in commodious and beautifully finished temples, but on purity of devotion, and a deep, heartfelt communion with God. The general state of society in this country has greatly improved, within one hundred years, in the comforts of life, and the Methodist people have not been behind the age in their advancement in knowledge, wealth and the elegancies of living. But improvement of circumstances, intellectual culture, and good taste are no evidences of positive decline in true piety; nor are intelligence and refinement of social habits a mark of apostasy from pure religion.

"That the Church is all that she should be, we dare not say. There are yet, as there always have been, too much selfishness and love of the world, too many cold or lukewarm Christians, too much envying and evil speaking, and too little of that fervent charity which is the bond of perfectness. Great, strong, and respectable as the Church is, it is not beyond the danger of apostasy and corruption. The fathers have fought a good fight and have labored hard to build the Church and leave it as a heritage to those coming after them, and the responsibility now rests upon those to take care of and perfect the same."

From the Semi-Centennial Sermon delivered before the New York East Conference, 1857, by the Rev. Laban Clark, D.D., the first pastor of this church as a separate station, 1816.

See page 40.

TO THE FOLLOWING FOUR MEN

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED:

Rev. SAMUEL McKEAN, D.D., our oldest living ex-pastor; author of the "The Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady;" son of the Rev. Andrew McKean, who organized this church in 1807.

GILES S. BARHYDT, who has personally known all our pastors since 1826, and who has held, in succession, every office within the gift of this church; son of Cornelius L. Barhydt, one of the original members of this church in 1807.

JOSEPH B. GRAHAM, whose devoted service to this church covers the second half of our one hundred years; to whom, more than to any other, we owe our commanding location and material equipment and prosperity.

WILLIAM WELLS, LL.D., Professor Emeritus of Union College; distinguished scholar and devout Christian; for a quarter of a century, superintendent of the Sunday School of this church.

(See illustration facing page 99.)

THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Schenectady, N. Y.

In the records of a meeting of the Quarterly Gonference of this church, held June 1st, 1906, occurs the following minute:

"Moved and carried that a committee be appointed by this Quarterly Conference to make preparations for a proper obser�ance of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of our church.

"Moved and carried that said committee consist of three members of this Quarterly Conference, that Dr. W. C. Kitchin be made chairman and that Dean B. H. Ripton and the pastor, Dr. F. W. Adams, be the other two members of this committee."

November 12th, upon the recommendation of the Centennial Committee, the Official Board of the church voted "that the celebration be held May 2nd-12th, 1907, and that the first Sunday in May be observed annually thereafter as Anniversary Sunday."

By resolution introduced by the same committee, the Official Board, February 11th, 1907, ordered "that a history of the church be published," and on the 21st of the same month, it was further voted that this history be "a book of about one hundred and fifty pages of text, with a suitable number of half tone illustrations to be issued in an edition of five hundred copies."

William Copeman Kitchin, born September 7th, 1855, at St. George, Ont.; Graduated, Academy of Oberlin College, 1878; A.B., Syracuse University, 1882; A.M., the same, 1884; Ph.D., the same, 1885; Member of Phi Beta Kappa; Graduate student, Harvard University, 1888-1892; Missionary teacher in Japan, 1882-1888; Professor of Romance Languages, University of Vermont, 1892-1900; In business since 1900. Author of "History of English Language," 1886; "Masterpieces of English Prose," four volumes, 1888; "Paoli, A Historical Romance of Japan in the 17th Century," 1890; "Story of Sodom," 1892; Frequent contributor in prose and verse to the periodical press.

Benjamin Henry Ripton, born March 21st, 1858, in the town of Johnstown, New York; prepared for college in the Johnstown Academy; Graduate of Union College, A.B., 1880; A.M., 1886; Ph.D., 1895; Member of Phi Beta Kappa; Received degree of Doctor of Laws from Syracuse University, 1896; Professor in Union College since 1886; Dean of Union College since 1894; Member of the Board of Education of the city of Schenectady, 1903-1907; Trustee of First Methodist Episcopal Church since 1896; Teacher of Bible classes in the Sunday School since 1886; Member of the General Conference of 1900.

Fred Winslow Adams, born Belfast, Maine, August 31st, 1866; Graduated, Kennebunk High School, 1885; Boston University, 1888-91. Taught one year at Maine Wesleyan Seminary and Woman's College; Special work at Harvard University and Yale Divinity School; Joined New York East Conference, 1896; Conference record as follows: 1896, Brooklyn, Nostrand Avenue (Assistant); 1898, Yalesville, Conn., First Church; 1900-01, New Haven, Conn., Epworth Church; 1902, transferred to Troy Conference and stationed at Schenectady, First Church (then State Street Church); Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Syracuse University, 1905.

PREFACE

The title page shows that this book is the product of collaboration. The three members of the Centennial Committee of the Official Board are responsible, as is there indicated, each for one of the three parts into which the book is divided.

Part First tells the story of seventy-four years of Methodist work in Schenectady, included in which are the first thirty-three years of the life of this church. The author of this section of the history has spared neither time nor labor in his efforts to cover as completely as possible the period assigned him. In addition to the early official records of our own church, he examined carefully several collections of old books and manuscripts in the State Library at Albany, the books and papers of the Troy Conference Historical Society, and the extensive literature on early American Methodism contained in the Methodist Library in New York. From the lips of the few men and women he has met whose memory carries them back beyond 1839, he has gathered reminiscences and traditions of the life of our church as they knew it in their childhood or heard of its still earlier days from their fathers. These researches brought together such a mass of material, much of it hitherto unnoticed, on the early history of Methodism in our city that the author found that, to include it all, would carry him far beyond the number of pages allotted his period. As a consequence, two entire chapters that he had prepared have been dropped out, and their place, and the place of numerous other matters which a fuller treatment of the subject would have included, are taken by brief foot-notes that refer the reader to the books and papers where omitted material may be found.

The purpose in Part Second has been to give a picture of life in the church under the varying conditions of the past seventy years, and to show how the church of the earlier period has developed into the great church of the present day. The

history has been written mainly from the official records, but considerable material has been derived from printed books, conference minutes, and newspapers. Much assistance, especially in interpretation of the records, has been obtained from the recollection of members of the church whose memory covers many years of its history, and the writer has had personal knowledge of many of the events of the past twenty-one years.

Part Third gives an account of the ten days centennial celebration. The natural and logical order of taking up the programme as presented day by day has been followed. The desire of the committee was to report in full all historical addresses. This has been accomplished, except in two cases where the lack of space made abridgement necessary. Even here, however, nothing was sacrificed which referred directly to our church.

The work of gathering material for the illustrations was the most difficult part of the undertaking. Frequently, the securing of a single photograph required the writing of several letters, or a journey to some other city. The labor of locating the first parsonage of the church extended over several weeks, and the discovery came none too soon, for, on the very day a photograph of it was taken, workmen began tearing it down, and, two days later, the building was razed to the ground. In connection with the work of collecting material for the illustrations, great credit is due our photographer, Mr. W. S. Ludden.

The book has been unavoidably delayed beyond the time originally set for its appearance, but this very delay has contributed not a little to its value by making the acquisition of additional portraits and historical data possible.

W. C. KITCHIN

B. H. RIPTON

F. W. ADAMS

Centennial Committee.

SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

Thanksgiving Day, 1907.



FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE (RIGHT)

(By the courtesy of Robson and Adee)

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In the above illustrations are contained one hundred twenty pictures of persons associated with the history of our church since 1766, twenty-two views of buildings, and eight miscellaneous views, making, all included, one hundred and fifty distinct illustrations.



WILLIAM COPEMAN KITCHIN

PART FIRST

FROM THE PREACHING OF THOMAS WEBB, 1766, TO
THE CENTENNIAL YEAR OF METHODISM, 1839

BY WILLIAM C. KITCHIN, PH. D.

Church Records Covering this Period

I. The first book of Minutes of the Board of Trustees, first entry, July 25th, 1808; last entry, November 25th, 1835. See page 24.

II. The second book of Minutes of the Board of Trustees, first fifty-two pages; first entry, May 24th, 1836. There are no records for the interim between November 25th, 1835, and May 24th, 1836.

III. An Account Book of the Recording Steward; The earliest entry, dated 1824, latest, 1841.

IV Another book of the Recording Steward, covering the same period as III; Contains some additional accounts and a large number of receipts for payments on salary, with auto-graph signatures of pastors, beginning with George Coles, 1826, and ending with Ephraim Goss, 1839.

V A book containing transactions of Class Leaders' meetings from October 5th, 1835, to May 28th, 1839. The records from July 11th, 1836, to May 28th, 1838, are in the handwriting of Noah Levings, making this book, from a literary and antiquarian standpoint, the most valuable possession of the church.

Other sources of information on this period are fully indicated by foot-notes in the text.

1789

1807—preachers in charge—1907

Schenectady circuit formed by

Freeborn Garrettson, 1789, with Lemuel Smith

and Cornelius Cook, preachers in charge.

Discontinued, 1790, and territory included in

Albany circuit. First society in this city

organized, April, 1807, by Andrew McKean,

preacher on Albany circuit, the next month

Schenectady circuit re-established by

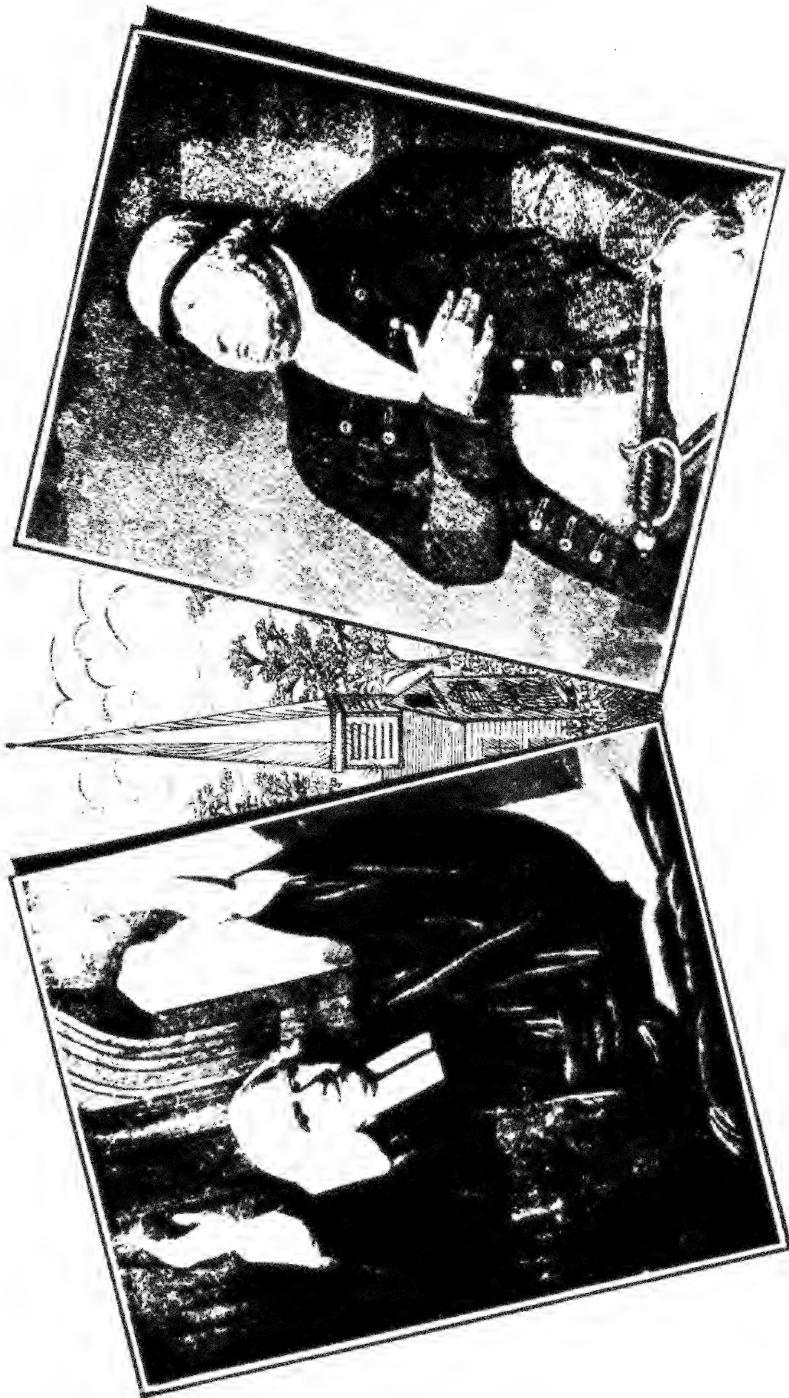
Bishop Francis Asbury.

In 1816, Bishop Robert R. Roberts made

this church a separate station.

Inscription on the Barhydt Centennial Tablet.

THOMAS WEBB
Lieutenant, 48th Regiment of Foot; Preached several times in
Schenectady in 1780



GEORGE WHITEFIELD
Preached in Schenectady, Monday, July 9th, 1770

CHAPTER I

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS

The first authentic record of Methodist preaching in Schenectady occurs in the memorandum book of George Whitefield, where we find this entry:—

“July 2, 1770.

Sailed from New York. . . and arrived at Albany July 6. Preached twice on the Lord’s day at Albany, and the next day at Schenectady, and was struck with the delightful situation of the place. Heard afterwards that the Word ran and was glorified, both there and at Albany. Grace, Grace!”¹

In a letter, written from New York, about three weeks later, Whitefield mentions Schenectady as one of the places where the congregations that gathered to hear him were “very large, attentive, and affected.”

Such is the first written record of Methodist preaching in this city; but, nearly fifty years ago, Rev. Samuel McKean, D.D., of Troy, then the pastor of this church, ran across a tradition among the older members of his congregation to the effect that the well-known British officer and Methodist lay preacher, Thomas Webb,² while stationed at Albany as Barrack Master in 1766, made several visits to Schenectady, where he preached and won a number of converts. Although there is not a shred of written evidence in support of the story, yet, from what we know of Webb’s zeal and activity elsewhere, there is no reason to discredit the tradition of which Dr.

¹ John Gillies: “Memoirs of the Life of Reverend George Whitefield,” New York, 1774, p. 243.

In the collection of papers, known as “The Sir William Johnson Manuscripts,” in the State archives in Albany, the writer found an autograph letter of one Daniel Campbell to Sir William at Johnstown, dated “Schenectady, N. Y., July 7th, 1770,” in which the following reference to Whitefield’s visit to this city is found:

“Mr. Whitefield is now in Albany and is to be here on Monday and its also said that he intends paying you a Visit but this I am not Certain of.”

² For the discussion of a very interesting question in connection with this soldier-preacher of early Methodism, see Appendix p. 145, “Thomas Webb Not a Captain.” Dr. McKean regards his discovery of the tradition of Webb’s visits to Schenectady as the most valuable result of his researches in local Methodist history. In his centennial address he referred to it in these terms: “I discovered his foot-prints and recorded them, and, but for this record, they would have been lost.” However six years earlier (1854), Parks in his “Troy Conference Miscellany” p. 22, says, referring to Webb: “I learn also that he visited and preached at Schenectady.”

McKean has the honor of being the discoverer. The interesting account of Webb's work here, we shall allow Dr. McKean to tell:

"There was standing, at that time, on the east side of Church street, near Union, a building used for bolting flour; in this building this soldier of the cross (Webb) preached the Word. He also preached in the house of Giles Van Voast, on Union street, several times and with considerable success.

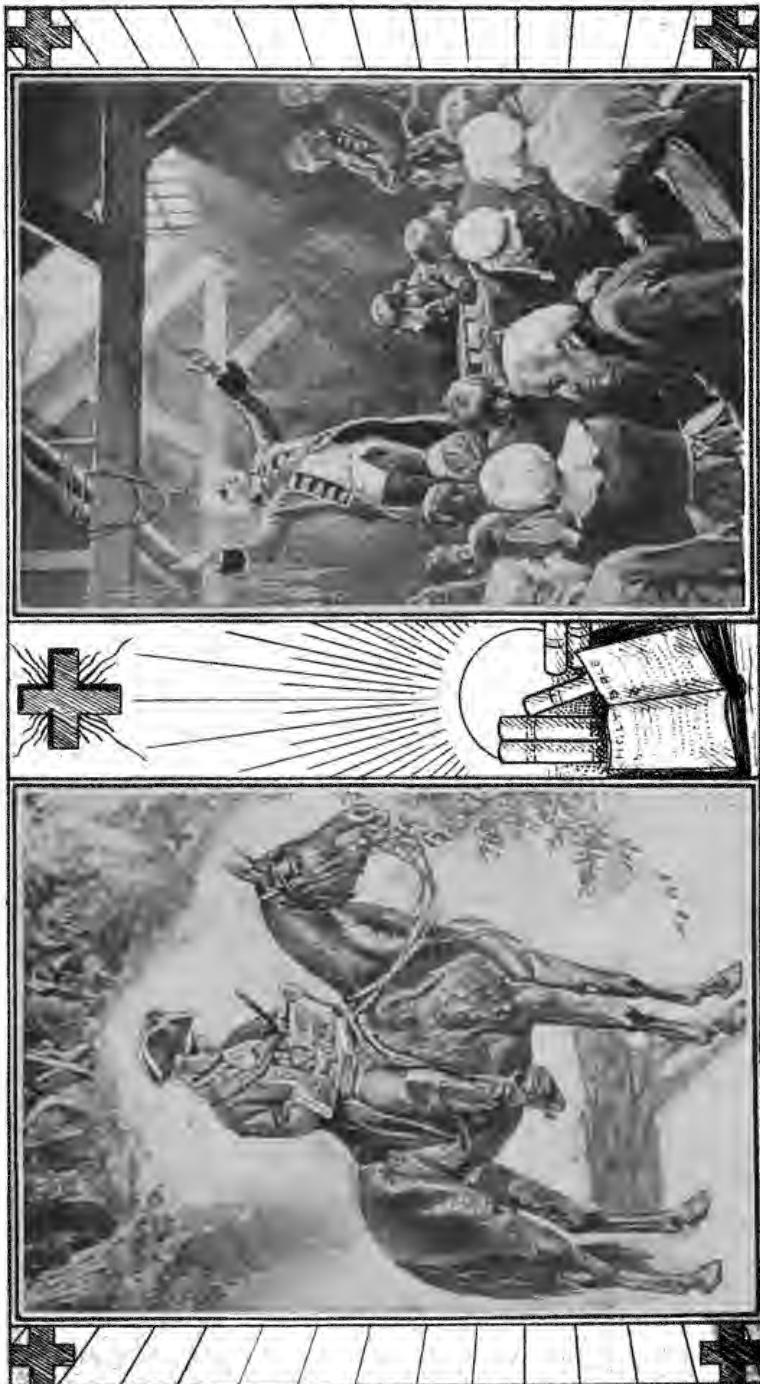
"It was a strange thing for a military officer, arrayed in the habiliments of his office, with his sword by his side, or lying on the table before him, to assume the place of an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people went to hear him out of curiosity, but were not unfrequently wounded by the sword of the spirit which he wielded with great power. He presented the truths of the gospel in a new light, and made Christ to appear more inviting and attractive than he had hitherto appeared. Some gladly opened their hearts to the Saviour he exhibited, and were made happy in his love. Among those who were converted under his preaching were Nicholas Van Patten, Giles Brower, Rachel Barhydt, and the wife of Giles Van Voast, in whose house he preached, also a colored man and a colored woman who were slaves.

"There was no society organized here at that time, but the persons to whom I have alluded, with others, whose names I have not learned, were accustomed to meet together after the departure of Webb for religious services. They were much opposed by those who could not appreciate their feelings, and were unacquainted with their enjoyments. Because of their deep piety and earnest devotion to their religion they were called, in derision, "New Lights." Most of these, if not all, continued faithful to the last, and in their godly lives and triumphant deaths, gave evidence that their conversions were genuine, and that God was with them."³

Neither the preaching of Webb nor that of Whitefield resulted in establishing Methodism in Schenectady. The time

³ Page 7 of "The Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady," an historical address delivered before the congregation of this church, March 11, 1860; printed by order of the Board of Trustees; re-printed and written down to date by Professor Lockwood Hoyt, in 1884. It is from this second edition that we quote.

Webb Preaching
(From Hurst's "History of Methodism;" by permission of Eaton and Mains)



was unpropitious. Already the storm clouds of war hung black and threatening over the country and soon came the clash of arms. The entire period of the Revolution was unfavorable to religious work, and it was not until 1788 that the Methodists began their efforts to establish themselves in the upper Hudson and Mohawk country. At the annual Conference of that year, Freeborn Garrettson, who had already successfully introduced Methodism into Nova Scotia, was requested by Bishop Asbury to take charge of a band of nine young itinerants, stalwart fellows flaming with zeal for the gospel, and with them to penetrate the country as far north as Lake Champlain, forming as many circuits as he could.⁴ Bangs in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," says of this movement:

"A great portion of this country was entirely destitute of religious instruction, more especially the northern and western parts of New York state, and the state of Vermont. There were, to be sure, some small scattered congregations of Lutherans, and Dutch Reformed, along the banks of the Hudson River, and some Congregationalists and Baptists in Vermont. It is manifest, however, that experimental and practical religion was at a very low ebb; and in most of the places, particularly in the new settlements on the west side of the Hudson River, not even the forms of it were to be found. The following is Mr. Garrettson's own account of the manner in which he was led in this holy enterprise:—

"I was very uneasy in my mind, being unacquainted with the country, an entire stranger to its inhabitants, there being no Methodist societies farther north than Westchester; but I gave myself to earnest prayer for direction. I knew that the Lord was with me. In the night season, in a dream, it seemed as if the whole country up the North River, as far as Lake Champlain, east and west was open to my view.

⁴ The names of this apostolic band, as given in the Conference Minutes of 1788, were: Peter Moriarty, Albert Van Nostrand, Cornelius Cook, Andrew Harpending, Darius Dunham, Samuel Q. Talbot, David Kendall, Lemuel Smith, and Samuel Wigton. To the last two named was assigned all the territory from West Point to Lake Champlain and from the Berkshires to the headwaters of the Mohawk river. It is safe to take for granted that Schenectady was visited during the year.

⁵ In the 18th century this was a common name for the entire course of the Hudson river.

'After conference adjourned, I requested the young men to meet me. Light seemed so reflected on my path that I gave them directions where to begin, and which way to form their circuits. I also appointed a time for each quarterly meeting, requested them to take up a collection in every place where they preached, and told them I should go up the North River to the extreme parts of the work, visiting the towns and cities in the way, and on my return, I should visit them all, and hold their quarterly meetings. I had no doubt but that the Lord would do wonders, for the young men were pious, zealous, and laborious.' "⁶

Mr. Garrettson and his pioneers began their work, and so rapid were the movements and so constant the preaching of these heralds of a new evangelism, that, before the winter set in, they had several large circuits formed. Mr. Garrettson passed back and forth among his swiftly moving preachers like a flying scout. "In going once around," he says, "I usually traveled about a thousand miles and preached upwards of a hundred times."⁷ Such was the coming of the Methodists into the upper Hudson and Mohawk country, and, concerning it, Parks, the Troy Conference historian, justly and beautifully remarks: "Who can contemplate the scene here presented without emotions of admiration? In the spirit of the apostles, this band went forth, without money, without influence, without friends, trusting alone in God, to wage warfare against the kingdom of darkness and gather souls to Christ."⁸

The high expectations that Mr. Garrettson entertained when he said that he "had no doubt but the Lord would do wonders" were fully realized. Notwithstanding the prejudice, opposi-

⁶ Nathan Bangs: "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," New York, 1839, vol. I, p. 260.

⁷ It seems that Mr. Garrettson himself led the way in the new northward movement, and, very probably, the first Methodist Episcopal sermon ever heard in this part of the country was the one he preached in the assembly room of the Capitol, at Albany, shortly after the adjournment of the Conference of 1788. "He was afterwards wont to relate, with pleasure, that this first sermon cost the state of New York some hundred dollars. When he arrived in Albany, the Legislature was in session, and he sent a petition to the Speaker for permission to speak in the Assembly room that evening. The subject was laid before the Assembly, and debated throughout the entire day, and was finally carried in his favor. In the evening he put on his gown, appeared in full canonicals, and delivered an extemporary sermon which met with general approbation." Rev. Laban Clark (*pastor here 1816, 1817*), in "Semi-Centennial Sermon," 1851, p. 10.

⁸ Stephen Parks: "Troy Conference Miscellany," Albany, 1854, p. 23.

A more detailed account of this first northward movement of Methodism is to be found in Bangs: "Life of the Reverend Freeborn Garrettson," New York, 1829.

tion, and even persecution, which he and his young missionaries encountered, they were able to report, at the close of the conference year, more than six hundred converts. We may be sure that Schenectady came under the notice of these early itinerants, and that, during the year, they occasionally preached here. The next annual conference, held in New York city, May 28, 1789, Bishop Asbury presiding, organized a Schenectady circuit and appointed, as preachers in charge, two of Freeborn Garrettson's young pioneers, Lemuel Smith and Cornelius Cook. From the meager records of the Conference Minutes, it is difficult to form much of an idea of the extent of territory covered by this circuit, but it probably included all the country between the Helderbergs and the Adirondacks and westward from the Hudson as far as the intrepid circuit riders found time to go.

Despite the absence of any written evidence on the subject, we may safely assume that both Smith and Cook frequently preached in Schenectady and we have positive knowledge that the great leader in this northward movement of Methodism visited our city. Under date of Sunday, July 5, 1789, Freeborn Garrettson writes in his journal; "I preached in Schenectady at ten and at three o'clock in the English Church, and, in the evening in a spacious hall, and had great hope that good would be done in the town. Prejudice hath taken deep root in the hearts of these people; at present, I fear, there is very little vital piety in the place."⁹

It is interesting to note that Mr. Garrettson is careful to indicate where his services were held. It was in St. George's Episcopal Church, in the very building still in use, that the first Methodist Episcopal sermon in Schenectady, of which we have a written account, was preached. It may be that the same church opened its doors on other occasions in those early days to the Methodist itinerant and his message, but if so, there has been left no record of it.

At the following Conference, 1790, the name of the circuit was changed to Albany circuit,¹⁰ and, for seventeen years, our

⁹ Quoted from the MSS. now in Methodist Library, New York.

¹⁰ For a tabulated record of the Conference and District Relations of this church, with a list of the presiding elders, see p. 150.

city disappears from the Minutes of the Conference, but, no doubt, not a single one of these seventeen years passed without visits from the Methodist itinerants whose rapidly increasing numbers and ceaseless travels called forth the remark from one of their enemies that they covered the country so suddenly and completely that they must have been rained down from the clouds. These were the days of Methodism's golden age of achievement, when her gospel rangers were sweeping over the land in that whirlwind campaign of spiritual conquest that was to plant a Methodist church in every rural community, and in every village, town and city between the Atlantic and the Mississippi.¹¹ In the eyes of the circuit riders of this part of the country, Schenectady must have appeared too strategic a point not to receive attention, and, therefore, we may assume that they made frequent attempts to secure a foothold here, but it is evident that they failed of success. Early in the nineties, a party of Methodist missionaries on their way to Canada, by way of the Mohawk river, stopped off at Schenectady for a week, and, no doubt, there was daily preaching during their stay. In 1796, under the entry in his journal for Tuesday, May 17, Matthias Swaim, one of the most indefatigable of our early circuit riders, writes: "At night, I preached in Schenectady for the first time, some collegians and others hearing."¹² Union College had been founded only the preceding year, and, thus early in its history, did it and Methodism come in contact. Five years later, we find this curiously puzzling record in the Minutes of the Common Council of the city.

"Saturday, February 1, 1801

"The petition of John Joyce and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church and others, praying the privilege of using the college hall for the purpose of holding public worship in, having been read and considered:

¹¹ The greatest authority on this heroic age of Methodism is the monumental work of Abel Stevens: "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," four volumes, New York, 1866-67. The second volume devoted to "The Planting and Training of American Methodism," covers the period under consideration.

¹² Quoted from MSS. now in possession of Troy Conference Historical Society.



Four Men Associated with the Schenectady Circuit of 1789

BISHOP ASBURY

(As he appeared then)

LEMUEL SMITH

CORNELIUS COOK

FREEBORN GARRETTSON

"Resolved that, in the opinion of this board, the granting of such leave without the consent of the trustees of the college would be a violation of an existing agreement between the said trustees and this Board, and that, therefore, the prayer of the said petitioners cannot be granted."¹³

What are we to infer from the phrase here used, "members of the Methodist Episcopal Church?" Does it merely mean that certain members of Methodist churches of other places had settled in Schenectady and now united, under the possible leadership of this John Joyce, in a petition to secure the college hall for regular Methodist preaching? Or, can it be possible that the organization of a Methodist society had been effected in this city as early as 1801? The language of the resolution would seem to indicate the latter, and there is nothing unlikely in such a supposition. We know that John Joyce was a lay preacher, and, possibly, he gathered the few Methodists in the city into a society; but, on his failure to secure the use of the college hall, the organization may have been broken up. We again hear of this same John Joyce a little later. In 1807, the Presbyterians of Schenectady were without a settled pastor, and, says Dr. Darling in his "Historical Sketch of the First Presbyterian Church," published in Pearson's "History of the Schenectady Patent," "the ear of the congregation was taken by an Irishman of the Methodist Church, a lay preacher, Mr. John Joyce. In spite of the peril of a threatened schism if Mr. Joyce were not settled over the church, the Presbytery declined to entrust the church to his care."¹⁴ This was in 1807, the year from which our church dates its origin.

This concludes our review of the pre-organization period of Methodism in Schenectady. Its doctrines had been preached here, with more or less frequency, for forty-six years, and, thus far, had attracted but a very scant following. In en-

¹³ Quoted from the Ms. Record Book now in the possession of Mr. Willis T. Hanson, Jr., Schenectady.

¹⁴ P. 403. Professor Pearson's work is the most scholarly treatment of the history of Schenectady that has yet appeared. Unfortunately it is very fragmentary and incomplete, a mass of invaluable information on the early history of the city, but totally lacking popular and systematic arrangement.

deavoring to explain this slow progress, we need to call to mind the remark of Mr. Garrettson in 1789: "Prejudice hath taken deep root in the hearts of these people." The years that followed bore witness to the truth of this observation. The sowers of the seed of Methodism found Schenectady a hard and slow soil. No stronger evidence of this is necessary than the fact that our city was the last place of any importance in this part of the country to be without a permanently established Methodist church.

CHAPTER II

1807, 1808

The first of the above two dates marks the birth year of our church as an ecclesiastical society; the second is the year from which we date our organization as a legally incorporated body.

In the issue of the Christian Advocate for April 21st, 1847, is to be found the first published account of the beginnings of organized Methodism in Schenectady. The article was written by the Rev. John Frazer, then the pastor of this church. Mr. Frazer's account was practically all reproduced in "The Troy Conference Miscellany" edited by the Rev. Stephen Parks and published in 1854.¹ A much more complete treatment of the subject is that contained in the little pamphlet, already referred to, "The Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady" by the Rev. Samuel McKean, D.D., published in 1860. His father, the Rev. Andrew McKean, had been prominently connected with the organization of this church in 1807, and the son who was called to be pastor a half century later came naturally by his deep interest in its history. Dr. McKean's story of the events of 1807, based upon what he had heard from his father and others who had taken an active part in these events themselves, is too valuable to give in any other than his own words. He says:

"In the year 1807, there resided in this city a local preacher of our church by the name of Benjamin Akin. A few persons who had occasionally heard the Methodists preach and were favorable to their doctrine, invited him to preach to them. He readily complied with this request, and, in January of this year, began to preach in the house of Richard Clute, on Green street. In the course of a few weeks, Frederick and Richard Clute were converted, and they afterwards became active mem-

¹ See pp. 57, 58 of that work.

bers of this church. On the evening of April 7th of the same year, a small company met together for a prayer meeting and it was an occasion of great interest. The spirit of God pervaded the assembly, strengthening believers and convicting sinners. On that evening, twelve persons sought and found the Saviour.

"In the conference year, ending May, 1807, my father, Andrew McKean,² was preacher in charge on Albany circuit. In the latter part of the conference year, he occasionally visited this city, held meetings, and looked after the spiritual welfare of those who had recently professed faith in Christ. Before the session of the ensuing conference, he formed these persons into a society and organized the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Schenectady. I have often heard my father refer to his visits to this city in olden times, and to the little band that constituted the first church."³

The New York Conference of those days embraced the entire state of New York, the western half of New England and the whole extent of Methodist work in Upper and Lower Canada. The circuit riders of all this widely extended territory came together May 2nd, 1807, in annual conference in the little Methodist church at Coeymans, thirteen miles south of Albany. The presiding bishop was that St. Paul of American Methodism, Francis Asbury. He had come up on horseback from northern New Jersey and under date of Friday, May 1st, he writes in his Journal:

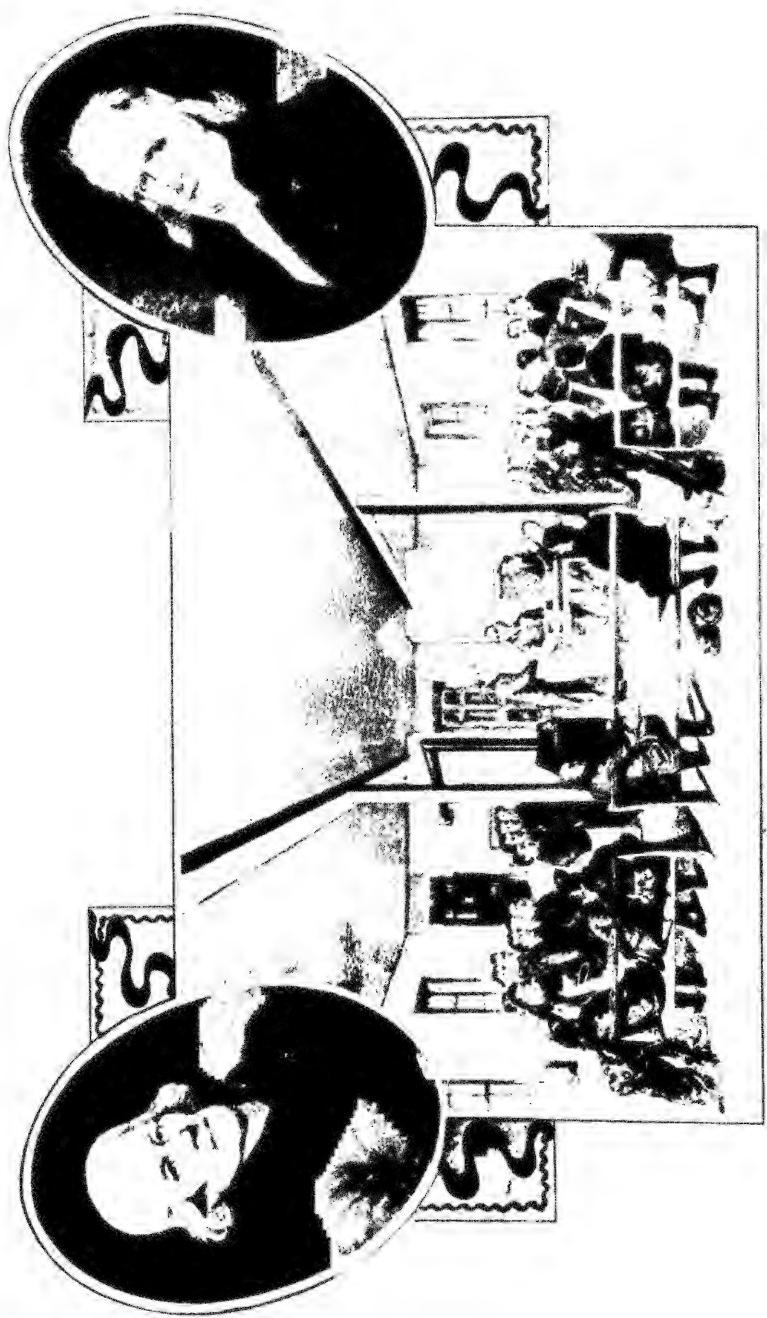
"We made forty miles over desperate roads and lodged at a tavern seven miles short of Coeymans Patent where the conference was to sit.

"Saturday, May 2nd. We met such members of the conference as were present.

"Saturday, May 9th. We concluded our labors. The

² Born in Huntington, Pa., July 28th, 1777; died at Mechanicville, N. Y., December 19th, 1863, in the 87th year of his age. Joined Conference in 1802 and retired from regular work in 1825. Concerning the heroic labors of this pioneer of Methodism, his biographer, in the Troy Conference Minutes of 1864, says: "He had moved almost every year, traveled large circuits, rode thousands of miles on horseback, and endured great hardships and exposures. In all the relations of life, he was amiable, sweet-spirited, and consistently pious. None knew him but to love him, and those who knew him best loved him most."

³ "Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady," p. 9.



BISHOP ASBURY
(From a portrait painted about the
time of the Coeyman's Conference)

An Early Methodist Conference
Bishop Asbury Presiding
(From an old print)

BISHOP ROBERTS
(Who in 1816 made Schenectady a
separate station)

preachers took their stations with the single heartedness of little children. I find two thousand and one added to the bounds of this conference. Eighteen preachers and three missionaries. We had much labor and great peace, and, although from the badness of the weather, we came home every evening through damp and mud, I had more rest than I should have had, had we convened in a city. We had preaching every noon.”⁴

The illustration on the opposite page, with a slight effort of the imagination, may serve as a picture of the rude and primitive surroundings of that historic conference at Coeymans at which the old Schenectady circuit of 1789 was revived and re-organized by lopping off twenty or more of the preaching appointments of the too widely extended and unwieldy Albany circuit. Here, in the picture, we see the aged saintly Asbury in the chair, and we may imagine the little company of preachers there to be the intrepid circuit riders of the Coeyman’s conference who “took their stations with the single heartedness of little children” and, after the adjournment of conference, went forth for another year to carry the gospel of a free, full and conscious salvation into still wider fields of labor. In those early days, the conference session was an occasion of solemn interest. William Thatcher, pastor of our church in 1818, 1819, has left us a description of one:

“What a congregation of Methodist preachers! what greeting! what love beaming in every eye! what gratulation! what rejoicing! what solemnity! The clock strikes nine. We are seated in the sanctuary, in conference order, around the sacred altar, within which sits the venerable Asbury, Bible in hand. A chapter read, a hymn sung, we kneel. How solemn, how awful, how devout the prayer! What hearty ‘amens’ are responded! Inspiration seems to pervade the whole. The prayer closed, we arise and are seated. The secretary calls the list of names, and how interesting to hear one’s own name in that book of life! The various business matters of the conference now engage our prayerful attention, conducted by

⁴ See, under dates given, vol. III, Asbury’s Journal.

the bishop, our president; six hours each day for the transaction of conference business, from nine to twelve in the morning and from three to six in the afternoon, each session opened with reading the Scriptures, singing and prayer, and closed with prayer.”⁵

In such a conference did the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Schenectady receive official recognition and become enrolled in the Conference Minutes as one of the societies of Methodism. The following month, Bishop Asbury stopped in the city while passing up the Mohawk on a preaching tour to the central part of the state. He had come up through Connecticut into western Massachusetts, and, from Pittsfield journeyed in one day to Waterford. Under date of Monday, June 15th, his Journal contains the following entry:

“Faint, sick and lame. I made twenty miles to Schenectady and was entertained at Isaac Johnson’s. He is a disciple of W. Hickson’s, gained by preaching in the streets of Brooklyn, Long Island. On Tuesday, it rained and I rested.”⁶

The first preacher appointed to the Schenectady circuit was Samuel Howe. We again quote Dr. McKean: “Mr. Howe preached here once in four weeks, occupying as preaching place Richard Clute’s dwelling until autumn. He then removed to a small house in Liberty Street where he held his meetings during the winter and spring. Under his ministrations, several were converted and added to the church. In the spring of 1808, the preacher appointed to the circuit was Seth Crowell. He preached in a building on State Street which was kindly furnished by its owner Dorsey Joyce.”⁷

After forty-six years of intermittent effort, Methodism had at last succeeded in establishing itself permanently in Schenectady. It still had a scant following, but just how many constituted the society organized by Andrew McKean in April 1807, it is now impossible to ascertain. It is not likely, however, that the number exceeded twenty-five, and we have no reason to believe that in 1808, there were more than forty

⁵ Quoted from Thatcher’s MSS. by Stevens: “History of Methodist Episcopal Church,” vol. III, p. 439.

⁶ See Journal, vol. III, under above date.

⁷ “Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady,” p. 10.



ANDREW MCKEAN

'The Organizer of this Church, April, 1807

Its First Pastor, 1867
Both Pictures taken more than a half Century Later

Both Pictures taken more than a half Century Later
The Samuel Howe picture is a copy of a portrait in the possession of the John Street Church
New York City. Under the portrait are the words: "With holy simplicity and godly
sincerity, he moved abroad, a wondrous picture of a saintly man."

SAMUEL HOWE

Its First Pastor, 1867

Methodists in the city. Nevertheless the little company began to plan the erection of a house of worship. In order to own property, it was necessary for them to incorporate. It was from this act of legal incorporation that they were wont to date the beginning of their church's existence rather than from the ecclesiastical organization of the society and its recognition by the Coeyman's Conference of the previous year. This is very evident from an entry that we find in the Minutes of the Board of Trustees, twenty-eight years later.

"The society in this place was first organized according to law on the 25th of July, 1808,⁸ and the first house was erected in the year 1808. The corner-stone was laid by the Hon. John Yates, Mayor of the City of Schenectady, July 28th, 1808."

The day following the organization and election of a Board of five trustees⁹ "to take charge of the temporalities of said church" as runs the language in the first entry in the book of Minutes, the newly elected officers held a meeting. The following is a copy of the record of this first meeting:

"The Board proceeded to business and took into consideration what should be allowed the sexton of said church and it was carried that \$5 (a year) be allowed him for his salary.

"It was then moved and carried that the church be set ten feet from each street and that the foundation be laid on Thursday, the 28th inst."

Then follows the statement that the corner-stone was laid at the time agreed upon and the following additional information is recorded:

"The lot to build said church on was bought some time ago according to an order of the society. It cost \$460, to be paid in three payments, the first \$160, which was paid down, and the remainder to be paid in two equal payments, the first in one year, and the second in two years from the date of the purchase."

⁸ See p. 147 for the record of this incorporation.

⁹ These were, Isaac Johnson, mentioned by Bishop Asbury, as quoted above; Darcy Joyce, a butcher, living on street near State street; Martin Frank, a shoemaker, living on the southeast corner of Union and Barrett streets; James Lighthall, of whom nothing is now known; and Amariah Chapin, a carpenter and one of the builders of the old Mohawk bridge.

CHAPTER III

LANDS AND BUILDINGS

The first volume of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees is the oldest and most precious of the records of our church. Its loss would be irreparable, because it is the sole authority for many of the most important events in our early history. It is an old musty leather bound record book, 8 x 13 inches in size, containing in its present condition, eighty-seven leaves. Originally, it had about twenty leaves more which, long ago evidently, were torn out of the back part of the book. It will be the purpose of this chapter to cull from its pages, yellow and faded with age, an account of the fortunes of our church from the weakness of the days of its beginning to that condition of comparative strength and stability which it enjoyed when, in 1835, the closing entries in this mutilated old book were written.

It will be remembered that the corner-stone of the first house of worship was laid July 28th, 1808. The society had not the means to complete the building and it remained in an unfinished condition for six years. Dr. McKean thus speaks of it:

"The church was erected on the north-east corner of Liberty and Canal streets, where the canal now runs. The worshippers who frequented it were not attracted thither by its beauty and grandeur; they sat not on cushioned seats, nor beneath frescoed ceilings. It was, at first, merely enclosed so that the people could meet in it. It was left without walls, and the seats consisted of loose boards on blocks."¹

¹ "Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady," p. 11. Such a meeting-house more than fulfilled the requirements of the Discipline of those early times. "Let all our churches be built plain and decent, and with free seats, but not more expensive than is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them. And, then, farewell to Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too." All that our Church law, as contained in the Discipline of 1904, has retained of the above section is: "Let all our churches be plain and decent and with free seats wherever practicable; and not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable."

It was in 1814 that steps were taken to complete the building. We read in the Minutes:

"Resolutions of a meeting held on Wednesday, September 7th, 1814, concerning the finishing of the meeting house:
 Resolved that there be two allies (aisles) in the meeting house.
 Resolved that the breastwork of the gallery be panel work.
 Resolved that Isaac I. Clute be superintendent of the carpenter work and D. Canfield of the mason work."

The following account of the treasurer, Isaac I. Clute, is of interest, if for no other reason than that it records a gift to the then obscure and generally despised Methodists from one of the great men of the day.

"Memorandum of Monies Received.

1814

September 14th, By cash from John Kline..	\$20 50
October 2nd, By cash from Paul Weidman.	5 00
October 11th, By cash from John Kline.	18 00
December 18th, By cash by way of collection.	40 43
December 18th, By cash from Dr. Nott ²	25 00
<hr/>	
	\$108 93

The minutes also record the expenditure the same autumn of an additional \$492.18 for material and labor. It would, therefore, appear that the finishing of their house of worship cost the Methodists at least \$600, a considerable sum in those days; and, when we remember that the membership of the church was, in all probability, not over forty persons, including youths and children, and the majority of these humble folk of very limited means, we cannot withhold our admiration at the splendid devotion and self-sacrifice which the little society displayed. Three years afterwards, Free-

² Rev. Eliphalet Nott, D.D., president of Union College for sixty-two years (1804-1866), the longest presidential term in the history of American Colleges. Dr. Nott was the unwavering friend of this church and its pastors and of Methodism generally. He and Freeborn Garrettson lived in terms of the greatest intimacy and their families were also united in this same close fellowship. Dr. Nott, throughout his long life of service to the college, frequently attended our church and it was through him that not a few of its pastors received their honorary degrees. He showed a peculiarly affectionate friendship for two of them in particular, Dr. Luckey (1820, 1821) and Dr. Levings (1836, 1837). For what Dr. McKean has to say in his centennial address, see p. 131.

born Garrettson visited Schenectady and, in this connection, his biographer comments on the material progress that Methodism had made in the city: "Here the Methodists, though few in number, and far from being wealthy, had recently, by great exertion, built a convenient house of worship, in which Mr. Garrettson preached with lively satisfaction."³

A few years later, on account of the building of the Erie canal, the church edifice was moved in a north-easterly direction from Liberty to Union street, and, in 1829, a vestry house was erected between the church and the canal. There are several persons still living who, in childhood, attended Sunday School in the Methodist Church in Union street, and they all declare that, judged by the simple taste of those days in respect to church architecture, both meeting house and vestry were very neat and creditable structures.

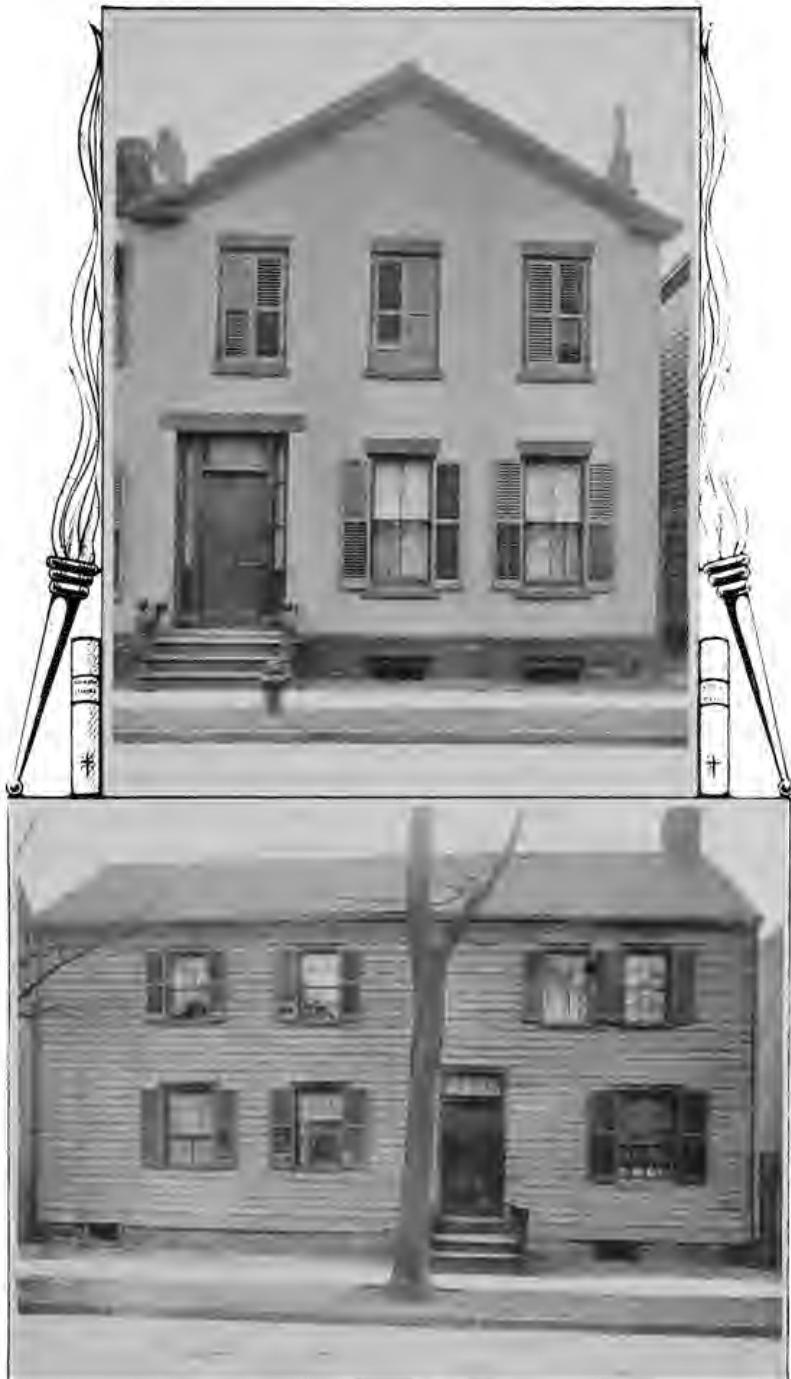
For the first eleven years, the Board of Trustees must have met very infrequently, or the records of their meetings must have been very imperfectly kept, for the minutes, covering all the recorded meetings from July, 1808 to May, 1819 fill only six pages of the record book. Frequently, an entire year is disposed of by the brief mention of the annual meeting with its election of one, or more, trustees to fill the place of those whose term of office had expired. The following entry will serve as an illustration:

"At a meeting of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Schenectady, publick notice being given at three publick meetings previous, July 25th, 1810, the members met according to appointment, and Richard Clute and Frederick P. Clute were elected trustees by a majority of votes."

The following resolution makes known to us that the land on which the church stood had not yet been wholly paid for. It is the only entry of these eleven years that gives us any information respecting the financial condition of the society.

"Resolved that a bond and mortgage be executed to Bartholomew Clute for the sum of two hundred dollars, under

³ Bangs: Life of the Reverend Freeborn Garrettson, p. 265.



Top: Residence of Richard Clute
(Remodeled about 1860)

Bottom: Residence of Frederick P. Clute
(Practically unchanged since 1807)

the seal of this Board, on the ground purchased from him for the erection of a house of publick worship, and which sum is due him for the balance of price of said lot."

Schenectady was no longer a part of Albany County,⁴ and, in order to have their legal corporative rights on record at their own county seat, the trustees re-incorporated the church, June 17th, 1819.⁵ From this date, the Minutes are much more satisfactorily kept. The Board of Trustees meets more frequently and takes into careful consideration "the temporalities of the church," and the clerk duly records the results of their deliberations. Whereas, from 1808 to 1819 the Minutes show an average of less than one-half page of record annually, from 1819 to 1835, there is an average of eight and one-half pages of closely written matter for each year.

In this same year, 1819, we have recorded the affidavit of the treasurer of the Board of Trustees, made before Simon A. Groot, one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, on the subject of the amount and value of the property of the church. The following is the statement made, in the spelling, punctuation and general arrangement of the original:

"An account and Inventory of all the estate both real and personal belonging to the methodist episcopal church in the City of Schenectady on the 22nd day of June 1819 together with an account of the annual revenue arising therefrom as follows to wit—

A Lott of ground in the second ward of the City of Schenectady with a church building thereon occupied as a place of worship Valued *three thousand dollars yealding* no revenue
A share of the avails of certain lands granted by Resolution of the Mayor Aldermen and Commenality of the City of Schenectady to the different Churches in the said City
The amount or annual revenue whereof is not yet known the hole of *said Lands not being disposed of*—

⁴ Schenectady County was organized in 1809, a year after the first Board of Trustees had filed articles of incorporation at the County Clerk's office in Albany.

⁵ See p. 148 for record of this incorporation.

Sundry articles for the use of Church yealding no revenue as follows to wit—

One Large stove & pipe valued fifty dollars

Five lamps valued thirty five dollars

Sundry other articles valued five dollars

Articles in use by the Minister of the Church yealding no revenue as follows to wit—

One bake stove valued at twenty eight dollars also half a dozen old setting chairs valued at one dollar & fifty cents

The reference to "lands granted by Resolution of the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonality" is of particular interest, because it was largely by means of "the avails" derived from these lands that the trustees were enabled, some sixteen years later, to engage in so considerable an enterprise as the building of the church in Liberty street.

In the year 1819, the Common Council made a gift of certain unimproved lands in Glenville, to which the city had acquired title from the land grants of colonial times, to the various churches. Although the Methodists had received their share of the endowment early in the year, it was not until Christmas Day that the lands had been disposed of and the covenant between the church and the city consummated by a bond which the Board of Trustees gave the Common Council that the conditions of the gift would be faithfully observed. This bond is in itself an interesting bit of both civic and church history. Omitting the preamble which merely recites the names of the different churches, included in the gift, the instrument reads as follows:

"And the aforesaid Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady does hereby in consideration of having



The Clute Family Bible Used in the First Methodist Meetings
Four Members of the Church of 1807

Left: CORNELIUS L. BARRYDT
EDWARD CLARK
Right: MARY MICHAEL CLUTE
RICHARD CLUTE

received their proportion of the avails thereof, amounting to Three thousand Eight hundred and one dollars forty one Cents, which is acknowledged to have been received as a fund for the support of the Gospel, to be denominated, The City Fund for the Support of the Gospel, the income of which is to be appropriated for that purpose only, The said Methodist Episcopal Church does therefore in consideration of receiving the said amount in mortgages on the land and lands do hereby covenant promise and agree to and with the said Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonality of the City of Schenectady, that the said fund shall forever hereafter be kept distinct from the other funds of the said Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady, and that at no time shall any of the principal of the said fund be applied to any use whatever, and in case the same is made use of without leaving an Equivalent in lieu thereof, the said Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady or their successors shall be obliged to pay such principal so used to the aforesaid Mayor, Aldermen, & Commonality of the City of Schenectady, their Successors or assigns, In witness whereof John H. Youngs, President of the said Board, by virtue of a Resolution of the Trustees when regularly met, hath affixed our Common Seal & hereunto subscribed his name as such this 25th day of December, 1819.

Witness:
JOHN S. GROOT.

JOHN H. YOUNGS.

A part of the lands included in this endowment shortly afterwards reverted to the church, evidently through the failure of the purchaser to pay the interest on his mortgage. Two entries, contained in the inventory of 1822, make this evident and also shows what income the trustees received from the remaining part.

"One hundred eleven acres and two roods of unimproved woodland lying and being in the Town of Glenville, on the east side of the Turnpike road about four miles from the City of Schenectady valued at \$1,226 $\frac{50}{100}$ dollars yealding no revenue."

"The sum of Two thousand five hundred & seventy four dollars & ninety one cents in Bonds against different persons secured by mortgages on lands etc. yealding the interest of one hundred eighty dollars twenty three & a half cents yearly."

The inventory of three years later shows that the one hundred and eleven acres had been sold⁶ and the income from "the City Fund for the Support of the Gospel" was yielding an annual income of \$250.17. The minutes make frequent references to the difficulty that the trustees experienced in collecting the interest on mortgages which they held on their Glenville property, but if compelled to foreclose a mortgage or take back a piece of land, it is evident that they were shrewd enough to succeed in selling that same land again at a considerably higher figure. The Inventory of 1831 gives the total valuation of property belonging to the Methodist Society as \$6737.50. To show fully how important a share of these assets the Glenville property had become, we transcribe the section devoted to its exhibit in this inventory.

	Value	Revenue
Bond & Mortgage against Stephen Slocum on Land in Glenville for	\$662.50	\$46.37½
Bond & Mortgage against Arch Cogshall on Land in Glenville for	662.50	46.37½
Bond & Mortgage against P. P Hogaboom on Land in Glenville for	443.75	31 06¼
Bond & Mortgage against Robert Crippen on Land in Glenville for	375.	26.25
Bond & Mortgage against Robt. Stephens on Land in Glenville for	501 75	35 12¼
Bond & Mortgage against Albert Peck on Land in Glenville for	500.	35
<hr/>		
Value & Revenue	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$3,145 50	\$220.18½

⁶ Under date of June 9th, 1823, the clerk made the following record, in reference to this sale: "We found that the land had been sold on June 7th, at \$9.00 per acre, and that \$301.75 had been received in cash and ample security taken for the remainder."

CHAPTER IV

PASTOR'S SUPPORT

Among the mass of statistics published annually in the Conference Minutes is one column under the heading, "Pastor's Support." Figures are not, ordinarily, very popular reading, but any of our ministerial brethren whenever they have had the experience of looking about for a change of appointment, will bear witness that, when considered with reference to the churches that may even remotely be regarded as possibilities, there is nothing more fascinating than this same column of "Pastor's Support." In like manner, all who are interested in the history of this church cannot fail to find much of interest in its early vicissitudes and struggles, as these are reflected in its financial dealings with its pastors.

In those earlier days, the business of the Board of Trustees was to have in charge what they designated as "the temporalities of the church," duties similar to those of the "Lands and Buildings Committee" of a modern Official Board. They attended to the real estate business of the church. To meet the expenses incident to repairs, building, and the payment of interest on outstanding notes and mortgages, they had, down to 1819, to depend solely on what they could secure from the so-called penny collections and from popular subscription. After 1819, there was added to the above, "the avails" from the church's lands in Glenville.

The pastor's support, and all the charitable and benevolent contributions of the church, were in charge of the stewards and class leaders. The pastor's salary was divided into two parts. The first was "the quarterage," so called because, originally, it was raised by a special collection taken once a quarter, or if secured otherwise, it was at least reported at the quarterly meeting. The second, and frequently larger, part was raised in the weekly collections in the class meeting and for this the class leaders were held responsible. This

part was popularly known as "the allowance for table expenses and fuel."¹

As might be expected, in view of the foregoing, the Minutes of the Board of Trustees contain very few entries referring to the preacher in charge. Sometimes the stewards and class leaders, finding themselves unable to meet their obligations would make such an appeal as the following which is found in an old stewards' account book:

"Whereas the stewards are deficient in meeting the demands against them, and whereas they have reason to believe that the class collections will not be sufficient to pay the preacher in charge for the present conference year,

Resolved that they respectfully request the trustees to aid them by supplying the said deficiency from the seat rents."²

There are a number of instances cited in the Minutes of the Board of Trustees where such petitions were received and invariably there is evidence that the trustees came to the rescue with such assistance as they could give.³ On one occasion, April 25, 1831, the Board, unsolicited, put itself on record as follows:

"Resolved that the following Resolution and Preamble be presented to the Rev. C. Carpenter;⁴

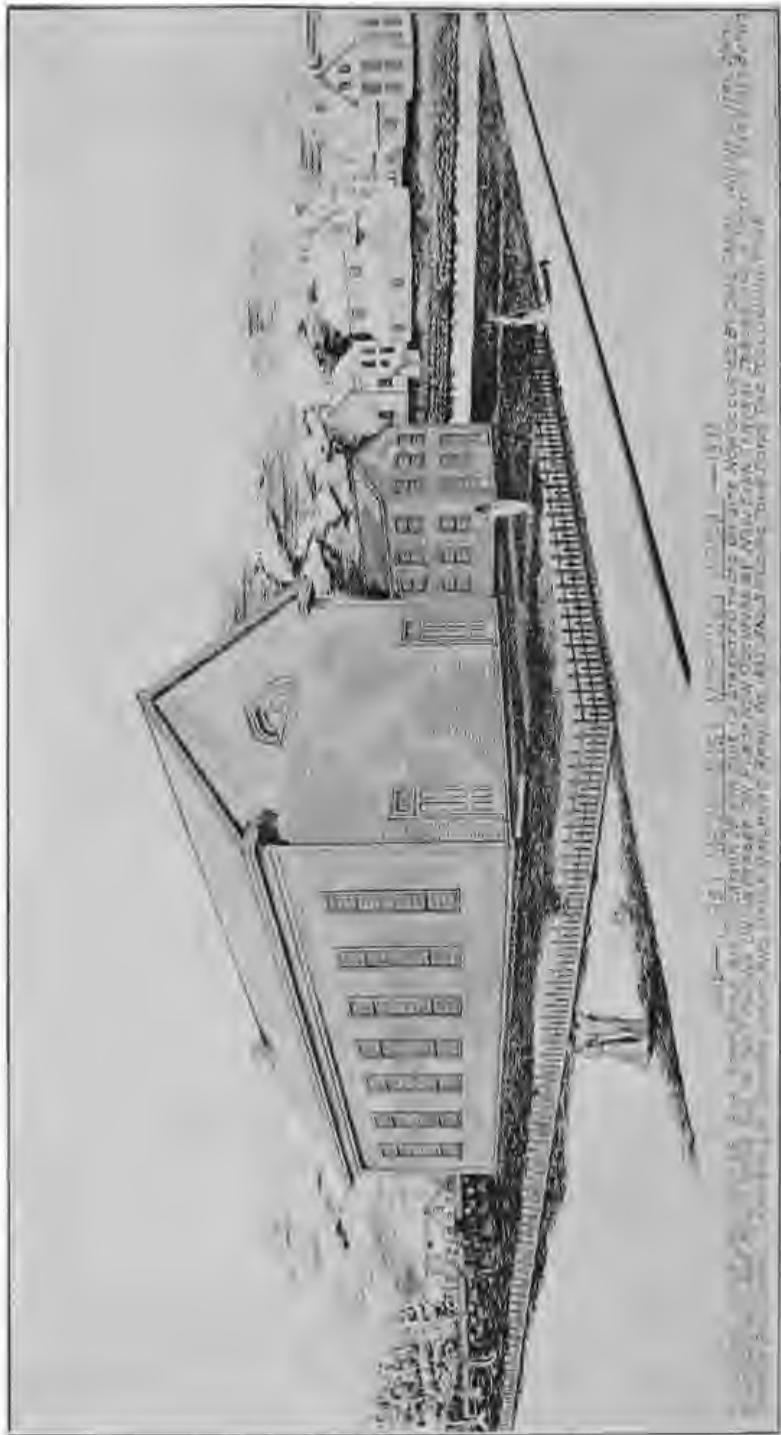
On motion of J. C. Burnham, it was resolved unanimously that this board view with regret the cold and inactive state of the society and the seeming unwillingness in many of the members to aid in the support of the gospel in this station. We heartily lament our inability to liquidate fully the claims

¹ Early editions of the Discipline provide for the pastor's support, as the following quotation from the Discipline of 1824 shows: "The annual allowance of the traveling preachers shall be one hundred dollars and their traveling expenses. The annual allowance of the wives of traveling preachers shall be one hundred dollars. Each child of a traveling preacher shall be allowed sixteen dollars annually, to the age of seven years, and twenty-four dollars annually from the age of seven to fourteen years."

² Seats in the first meeting-house were free down to 1828. The Trustees then decided, evidently after no small debate and difference of opinion, to rent the seats to help raise funds for the pastor's support. Two years later, "at a meeting of the male members of the Methodist Society," it was resolved that "the trustees have our unanimous consent to lease the seats from year to year as may by them be deemed most beneficial for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare and safety of the church generally." In leasing seats, the trustees reserved the right "of filling up all such seats as may remain either wholly or in part vacant, after the close of the first prayer, with such Decent persons as may be destitute of seats.

³ Not always with good grace, however. See p. 72.

⁴ Coles Carpenter, pastor here 1830, 1831. See pp. 43, 44.



THE CHURCH IN UNION STREET
(As it appeared about 1840)

Brother Carpenter has on us for his support the year past. Viewing as we do the barren state of things in our church, we believe that, unless some measures be taken to arouse them to action, our support for the coming year will be still more limited than the year past. Yet should he return to us, we will stand by him and do our best for his support."

Equally interesting, and marked even with a touch of pathos, is the following entry, under date of September 25th, 1832, with respect to another pastor:

"Rev. Stebbins⁵ presented an order from the Stewards for \$130. being the amount of his table and wood expenses. The order is in these words—'We the Committee appointed by the quarterly meeting Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in session September 8, 1832, to make out an estimate and report to the stewards of said church the table expenses and expenses for fuel for Rev. S. Stebbins for one year commencing June 1, 1832, ending May 31, 1833, are of the opinion that the expense for the table will be \$80.00, fuel \$50—\$130.00. All of which is respectfully submitted, Schenectady, Sept. 10, 1832.

J. M. VAN SLYCK
J. C. BURNHAM
EDWARD CLARK

Order.

Committee.

'For the within the Bearer, Salmon Stebbins, is directed to call on the Board of Trustees who are requested to pay the same from the moneys arising from the rents of our church lands and from time to time as they may find themselves prepared.

Sept. 17, 1832.

I. D. FELTHOUSEN
EDWARD CLARK
GEORGE FOWLER
J. M. VAN SLYCK
HENRY CLUTE
Stewards.

⁵ See p. 56.

"Whereupon it was resolved that this board pay on the above order such proportion of the same as they may find themselves capable, after discharging such other accounts as they may deem of greater importance."

Perhaps human nature asserted itself, even in a Methodist preacher accustomed to having his right to daily bread ignored, and made good pastor Stebbins query, if not aloud, at least to himself what the officials of his church could "deem of greater importance" than to discharge the moral obligation to which they stood pledged to provide the man who ministered to them in spiritual things with the bare necessities of life.

We close our quotation from the Minutes on the relations of pastor and trustees with an extract from the proceedings of the meeting of October 16th, 1820, which has nothing of the half-tragic element of the former two. The pastor, the Rev. Samuel Luckey, afterwards the distinguished Dr. Luckey of Rochester, had notified the trustees that he had no need of part of the parsonage barn and that they might rent it if they wished. In an Official Board meeting of today, so trifling a matter, if alluded to at all, would likely be referred to some one to look after and the secretary would dispose of it with a line or two of record. Not so in 1820. The affair was treated with a dignity and a seriousness that, to our minds, borders on the ludicrous. The trustees met in extra meeting called for the special purpose of considering the pastor's communication. After due deliberation they took action, and their action was embodied in ponderous preamble and resolution:

"Whereas the board has been informed by Samuel Luckey, the preacher in charge, that he should, for the future, relinquish all use of the barn belonging to the premises which he has occupied for some time past (except that part which is used for a wood-house and the department where he keeps his harness, etc.), thereupon it was

"Resolved that John N. Vrooman constitute a committee to take charge of that part of said barn which said Luckey has relinquished the use of for the future and let the same to

Daniel Webb or some other suitable person on such terms as may be agreed on by the parties, and that he be authorized to collect the monies for the same, which, when collected, are to be paid over by him to the stewards of the Church."

It is interesting to turn over the yellow and faded pages of the old account books of the recording stewards of this church down to 1840 and see therein the grim evidence of the chronic financial difficulties with which the pastors and people of that period had to contend. The great majority of the church membership were, as has already been said, of very limited means, and, no doubt, as the trustees' resolution of 1831, cited above, indicates, there were many who were able to give more liberally than they did. There were no stated and regular dates on which the pastor could depend on being paid what was due him. He received his money whenever the recording steward happened to have some funds on hand, and very often money came hard and in small amounts. It is really pathetic to see in what miserable driblets the ablest pastors of those times, men who would adorn our pulpit today, received their much-needed stipends. Very seldom did any one payment exceed \$10 in the earlier part of the period under review, \$5.00 was a common installment, and not infrequently the payments were \$3.00, \$2.00, and even \$1.00 is several times recorded. In the decade 1830-1840, the average amount of payment increased somewhat, but all through the period, the pastor seems to have had no means of knowing how frequently, or infrequently, he would receive his money, and, not unseldom, he had to wait six weeks or two months without receiving anything.

There are no account books, now in existence, of earlier date than 1824. It was that year that Daniel Brayton was appointed the pastor of this church, and we find, by referring to the recording steward's book that his income from both quarterage and allowance for table expenses amounted, during his second year, to \$210.80. The literary and popular George Coles⁶ who succeeded him received \$300 the first

⁶ See p. 42.

and \$325 the second year.⁷ The amount paid the preachers continued slowly to increase. In 1833, J. B. Houghtaling was given \$180 for table expenses and fuel, \$336 quarterage and allowed \$16.00 for traveling expenses to and from Conference, a stipend amounting to \$532.00. His income the second year was slightly less. Perhaps he and his flock failed to get along together as harmoniously as might have been. Evidently there had been some trouble, the exact nature of which is now unknown, for we find in the receipt book where all pastors wrote their acknowledgements of money received, the following receipt in the handwriting of Pastor Houghtaling. He is about to shake the dust of Old Dorp off his departing feet, and he thus pays his respects to the flock he is leaving:

"Received thirty $\frac{77}{100}$ dollars, given that it may appear to all the world that I was a legal voter at the last trustee election, Sept. 7, 1835, and that I am clear of the Doripeans (Dorprians?) and they of me.

J. B. HOUGHTALING."⁸

The next year witnessed the building of the church in Liberty Street under the pastorate of Truman Seymour who received, during his one year's stay, only \$468.17. With the new church completed and occupied and the coming of Noah Levings, perhaps the most eloquent preacher this church has had in her entire one hundred years, the pastor's salary, for the first time, went beyond the six hundred dollar line, Levings receiving \$614. each of the two years of his pastorate.

⁷ Not very much for such a man; were he living and in the prime of vigor to-day, this church might well congratulate itself if it secured him as pastor. But George Coles must have been an adept in financial economy for he saved money on even a smaller salary. Two years before his appointment to Schenectady, he closed a term of service on Hudson circuit, and he thus speaks of it: "At the close of the second year, my family consisted of five persons, myself and wife, two children, and a hired girl. I kept a horse and traveling apparatus for winter and summer. I received of the stewards for support the exact sum of two hundred dollars, and, notwithstanding my doctor's bill, which was more than twenty dollars, I left the place free of debt." "*My First Seven Years in America*," p. 277.

⁸ Mr. Houghtaling at the first session of Troy Conference in 1832, was appointed its Secretary, a position he held for nineteen years. Bishop Hedding declared that he was the best Conference Secretary he had ever known. Mr. Giles S. Barhydt says of him, in connection with his pastorate of this church: "He was of active and bustling habits and manner, and of a cheerful disposition. He would have been taken very readily for a business man rather than a preacher. He had, indeed, very little of the conventional ministerial air about him." See *Daily Union*; February 26, 1877.

Ephraim Goss who succeeded Levings and was pastor here the two years 1838 and 1839, was allowed the same salary as his predecessor had been receiving, but it is very evident that, under the ministry of the less gifted and popular preacher, the church experienced difficulty in raising money. Goss left Schenectady with his claim upon the church still not fully met, and, three years later, we have his receipt covering a partial payment of the church's indebtedness to him:

"Received of Levi Teller, recording steward of the church in Schenectady \$15.00 towards quarterage and table expenses.

EPHRAIM GOSS."

CHAPTER V

MEN OF RENOWN

Enough was said in the previous chapter to illustrate the financial relations of pastors and people. We shall now turn to a consideration of the preachers themselves. Here, our official records lend little assistance. To learn what manner of men these early pastors were, we have to consult the general histories of Methodism, the memoirs published in the Conference Minutes, and the pages of the periodical literature of the Church. In a few instances, we have their own published writings to aid us. The limitations of our space forbids an individual account of each of the twenty-eight preachers under review.¹ We must content ourselves with a general characterization of them as a class, and a brief estimate of the few who attained a celebrity throughout the entire denomination; in other words those whose achievements entitle them to be spoken of as men of renown.

The preachers who occupied the pulpit of this church from 1807 to 1836, taken as a whole and judged by the standards of our times as well as their own, were men of no mean ability. Several of them would, in any age, be regarded as remarkable men. None of them had had the advantages of a college training, nevertheless they were close students both of books and of human nature. Among them were those who, without the aid of school or teacher, mastered Greek and Hebrew sufficiently to read the Word of God in its original tongues. Others were diligent students of history, literature, and philosophy; all were past masters in Methodist theology, skillful in defending its positions and eloquent in expounding its practical truths. They delighted in the controversial features of doctrinal preaching. In Biblical interpretation, they were uncompromising literalists. Sin, the devil, hell, eternal punishment in unquenchable fire were all grim realities to them, and

¹ A tabulated record of all the pastors of this church from 1807 to 1907 will be found on p. 152.

they deemed it their duty to make their utterances on these subjects as luridly vivid as possible in order that they might strike dread into the heart of the sinner and frighten him into fleeing the wrath to come. With equally insistent fervor, they preached the tender mercies of God and the yearning love of the Christ, weeping over sinners and not willing that any should perish, but that all might come unto him and find eternal life. The very heart of their message was that salvation was free to all men, and that not only might the vilest sinner find pardon but that it was possible for him to know for himself that his sins were forgiven.

Like all other Methodist preachers of those times, the early pastors of our church were pre-eminently revivalists, or, as we would perhaps say today, evangelists. Seth Crowell, who preached here in 1808, was regarded, among his ministerial brethren, as a leader in camp-meetings and revival services. He was a man of fine personal appearance, attractive and impressive as a preacher and simple and natural in manner. Says one who knew him well: "His voice may be said to have been one of great compass—it was not ordinarily very loud, but it was clear and far reaching, and sometimes would swell to a note of prodigious power. It would occasionally take on the most subduing pathos, and would fall upon his hearers in mellow, plaintive tones that would be perfectly irresistible. And what he said was always worthy of the manner in which he said it."² We are further told that frequently Mr. Crowell's eloquence "put his audience in consternation and some were known to run terror-stricken from his solemn presentation of eternal realities." Dr. Luckey declares that "Mr. Crowell's countenance was more intensely grave and solemn than that of almost any person I ever met. In all my intercourse with him and observation upon him, I never saw him laugh, and rarely saw him smile." His preaching was everywhere attended with great success and he was instrumental in the conversion of a multitude of souls.

² W. B. Sprague: "Annals of the American Pulpit," New York, 1856, vol. VII, p. 353. See also, Stevens: "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Vol. III, p. 478.

Of even greater prominence in the denomination at large was Samuel Merwin, who was appointed to Schenectady Circuit in 1811. His name was a household word throughout the constituency of Methodism from Canada to Maryland. Stevens thus characterizes him: "Dignified in person, powerful in eloquence, generous in spirit, and mighty in labors, he was one of the most popular preachers of his day. His person was large and commanding, and his voice musical and strong, swaying the greatest assemblies. Exceedingly graceful in his movements and lively in his affections, he was a perfect Christian gentleman. His pulpit appeals were accompanied by a flaming and sweeping eloquence, sometimes rising to wonderful power and majesty."³ Mr. Merwin had a prominent part in originating and maintaining the benevolent enterprises of his own denomination as well as several of a more general character. His interest in philanthropic work and his abilities as a platform speaker in its behalf gave him a national reputation. He was well fitted to fill positions of honor and influence, and his Church showed her wisdom in appointing him a chief among his brethren.

The first three pastorates of our church, from the time it was taken out of the circuit, and made a separate station by Bishop Robert R. Roberts in 1816, were filled by men who later were very conspicuous figures in the history of Methodism. Laban Clark (1816-17) became a recognized leader in the Church, the chief founder of Wesleyan University and the first and only president of its Board of Trustees down to his death in 1866. He is described as "a man of vigorous physical health, of strong and genial mind, of great practical capacity, of never wavering enthusiasm for his Church and all its important enterprises, a living history of it for more than threescore years."⁴

William Thatcher (1818, 1819) was known far and wide as a revivalist, scarcely less powerful and useful than

³ Stevens: Vol. III, p. 455; Sprague: Vol. VII, p. 333.

⁴ Stevens: Vol. IV, p. 69. Dr. McKean, speaking of Mr. Clark's pastorate in this church, says: "He was highly esteemed by the clergy and citizens both as a man and a preacher. Many were attracted to the Methodist church to hear his sermons, who had seldom entered it before. Methodism arose in influence under his administration." "*Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady*," p. 13.



Some Pastors of the Church in Union Street

Top—Left to right: Samuel Merwin, 1811; John B. Matthias, 1813; Laban Clark, 1816-17
Center: William Thacher, 1818-19; Samuel Luckey, 1820-21; George Coles, 1826-27
Bottom: Buel Goodsell, 1828-29; Jas. B. Houghtaling, 1833-34; Truman Seymour, 1835

Seth Crowell and the other most widely celebrated circuit evangelists. He was a tireless worker. In his younger years, it was a common thing for him to preach twenty-four sermons a fortnight and ride from two hundred to two hundred and fifty miles. While passing on horseback from one appointment to another along the country roads and through forest trails, he improved his mind by reading and study. Thus rigorously economizing his time, he was enabled, says Stevens, "to acquire an extensive general knowledge and considerable proficiency in the original language of the Scriptures."⁵

Self-educated to a degree that surpassed the culture of many of his college educated contemporaries, Samuel Luckey, who occupied the last of the three consecutive pastorates under consideration (1820, 1821), was a man that reflected honor upon every church he served, and, wherever he labored, there Methodism was given additional dignity and influence in the community. He filled many prominent positions in both church and state. When only twenty years of age, Mr. Luckey was thrown on the heroic tests of the early itinerary in Montgomery circuit, lying in the Mohawk valley west of Schenectady circuit. He had between thirty and forty appointments in schoolhouses, barns, cottages, and workshops, requiring about three hundred miles ride in four weeks, and almost daily preaching. He carried with him a few text-books in theology and in the Latin and Greek languages, and there began that course of faithful public service, which identified his name with the history of the Church for more than half a century. As circuit preacher, presiding elder, principal of Genesee Wesleyan Seminary at Lima, N. Y., editor of the "Christian Advocate" from 1836 to 1840, regent of the University of New York for many years, a participant in many General Conferences, and, in his vigorous old age, chaplain to the charitable institutions of Rochester, he performed an amount of public labor hardly surpassed by any of his contemporaries.⁶

⁵ Stevens: Vol. III, p. 440. Simpson's Cyclopaedia of Methodism says of his studious habits: "It was his custom to read the Bible through annually which he had done critically and prayerfully since 1800. He read it through several times in Greek and the Old Testament in the Hebrew." For an account of the work of this great revivalist in our own church, see pp. 47-50.

⁶ Stevens: Vol. IV, p. 259.

Among the many prominent preachers who have been identified with this church during the past century none, perhaps, have equaled the literary taste and ability of the winsome and genial little Englishman who was pastor here 1826, 1827. George Coles was not a profound scholar nor yet a great preacher but he had the artist's eye for the beautiful and the poet's gift that enabled him to say rather commonplace things in the most charming and delightful way. He was passionately fond of the poets, and was himself a verse writer of no mean ability. He composed music and was the author of a number of books, one of which, "My Later Years,"⁷ tells in the simplest and clearest of English his experiences as pastor of this church. For twelve years, Mr. Coles was the assistant editor of the "Christian Advocate," and later, as editor of "The Sunday School Advocate," he won especial recognition as a writer for the young. He has justly been called "the pioneer in the Sunday School literature of Methodism."

⁷ A chapter entitled "A Pastor's Journal," was prepared for this book, but has been crowded out through lack of space. This, based on the published journal of George Coles, was intended to give a picture of Methodist clerical life in Schenectady in the early nineteenth century. If any of our readers are interested in the subject they can find all the material on which the omitted chapter was based, in pages 9-53 of the book above referred to. Mr. Giles S. Barhydt, to whose "Reminiscences of an Old Citizen," reference is frequently made in this volume, says that his earliest recollections of this church are associated with the pastorate of Mr. Coles. Dr. McKean says of him: "He cherished great affection for his people and felt a deep solicitude for them." Speaking of his love for young people, the same writer tells the following story: "On one occasion, while pastor here, he was receiving some youth into the society. They had been pointed to the Saviour by his hand and he was anxious that they should prove faithful. While exhorting them, he suddenly stopped and then he burst forth in most melodious tones and sang:

'O Children, praise him
For He is your Father, God.'

One who was present speaks of the incident as so deeply impressive and touching that it can never be erased from his memory." "*Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady*," p. 19.

Mr. Coles' love for children is apparent in the account he gives of his last visit to Schenectady in 1846, eighteen years after the close of his pastorate here. He writes: "The aspect of things has greatly changed in Schenectady since 1828. The old Methodist church near the canal has been supplemented by a more substantial and costly one, in a more eligible part of the city. That juvenile choir of eighty well-trained singers have commenced their earthly career since then, and, what was no small gratification to me, was that those dear little girls who belonged to the infant class of 1827-28 are now teachers and officers in the Sunday School of 1846." "*My Later Years*," p. 76.

It is related in Simpson's Cyclopaedia of Methodism that Mr. Coles had always felt a great dread of dying, but that just before death that dread entirely disappeared. When dying, "he requested prayer, and, at its close he responded with deep feeling; raising his hand, he exclaimed, 'Awake!' as if some heavenly voice saluted his ear. He then leaned back and slept in Christ."

In the year 1819, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in New York City. There were nine present at the meeting in which the establishment of the Society was agreed upon. Laban Clark, pastor here in 1816-17, introduced the resolution to organize. He together with Nathan Bangs and Freeborn Garretson, the father of Methodism in Schenectady, as well as elsewhere in the upper Hudson and Mohawk country, were appointed a committee to draft a constitution. Of the remaining six that were present, three were former pastors of this church, Samuel Howe, the first preacher in charge, Seth Crowell, the second, and Samuel Merwin, of 1811, a glowing testimony to the calibre of the men who had given some of their best thought and prayerful labors to this church.

Of a type wholly distinct from any of the men of whom we have been speaking, was Coles Carpenter, (1830, 1831). Mr. Giles S. Barhydt, who remembers his pastorate here, in his "Reminiscences of an Old Citizen," published in the *Daily Union* some years ago,⁸ calls Mr. Carpenter "the weeping preacher," and says of him:

"Few men have ever impressed their hearers more deeply than he did with a deep conviction of their sincerity. His was a warm and sympathetic nature. He was himself powerfully affected by the solemn message he addressed to others, and his presentation of it seldom failed to awaken his sympathies, excite profoundly the emotions of his own breast, and force the tears from his eyes. Coles Carpenter was truly eloquent, moving and persuading others by his message of reconciliation."⁹

"There was more of John than of Peter in his character," says his biographer. "His own soul and the souls of all around him melted beneath the power of his appeals. Sometimes he rose, apparently, above himself, and poured forth a stream of elevated, chaste, flowing eloquence that astonished and overwhelmed the people."¹⁰

⁸ During the year 1886-87. Those treating of former Methodist preachers appeared, for the most part, the first half of 1887.

⁹ See *Daily Union* February 19, 1887.

¹⁰ See Troy Conference Miscellany, pp. 113-122, from which the above is quoted, for a very sympathetic appreciation of this remarkable man.

It is remarkable with what unanimity of affectionate praise all who knew Mr. Carpenter and have written of him express themselves. "An able preacher and a lovely spirited man," says one of his colleagues. Dr. Luckey declares: "He was one of the most truly eloquent men that I ever heard. In direct appeal to the heart and conscience, I am not aware that I have ever met with his superior."¹¹ Dr. McKean, speaking of Mr. Carpenter's pastorate in our own church, says: "This church was blessed with his faithful and eloquent ministry for two years, and, during that time, he secured the confidence and esteem not only of his own people but that of the community generally."¹²

The other pastors of this period, whose names have not appeared in this chapter, were many of them equally devoted and faithful to the work of the Gospel here in Schenectady. If it was not their fortune to achieve so national a renown as did some others, the results of their consecrated labors were none the less manifest and abiding. Did space permit, they each would have commemoration. Perhaps if all their forgotten labors in Schenectady were known, the correct appreciation of their merits would give special mention to some of them, even at the expense of excluding those to whom it has been given.

¹¹ Sprague "Annals," pp. 465-467.

¹² "Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady," p. 21.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS LIFE

In the Minutes of the Board of Trustees of this church but little reference is made to the spiritual life of the society. We are not, however, to infer from this that the men who had charge of the temporal concerns of Methodism in Schenectady were, therefore, themselves lacking in personal experimental religion. From other sources, we know that they were devout Christian men. Among the few, yet living, who remember them, their names, almost without exception, are still fragrant with the memory of a humble, consistent, upright life, rich in kindly deeds and in an utter loyalty to the church. They were constant attendants at all three services on the Sabbath, at prayer meeting, and, of course, at class meeting, attendance at which was compulsory with dismissal from church membership as the penalty for non-compliance. A number of these early trustees were, at the same time, class leaders, exhorters, or local preachers, and, during that period of the church's history when every winter had its six weeks, or more, of "protracted meetings," these laymen rendered invaluable service to the preacher.

What was true of the officers of the church, characterized the membership as a whole. Some of them had come out of the other churches of the city and had joined the Methodists under the conscientious conviction that the new sect would afford them a greater opportunity to do effective religious work.¹ The others were converts won to the church in Methodist revivals, and had all the energetic zeal and demonstrative enthusiasm that distinguished the genuine Methodist of a century ago. They suffered persecution from the enemies of righteousness, they were misunderstood and too

¹ Notably, Richard Clute and his wife, in 1807, and Colonel Zegar Van Santvoord, in 1819, but these are only conspicuous cases among not a few members of other churches, who saw in the new movement called Methodism, an opportunity for a richer personal spiritual life and greater service to Christ.

frequently despised by the members of other churches, they often had to endure the censure and bitter reproaches of friends and relatives. These things tested severely all who professed faith in the doctrines and ways of Methodism and winnowed the chaff from the wheat. Only men and women of superior strength of character could endure these things and continue steadfast. The early members of this church were few but select.²

It had taken Methodism forty-six years from the time Thomas Webb first preached its doctrines here before it succeeded in securing a permanent foothold; it was thirty years, after its establishment, before its followers can be said to have won for themselves and their church anything approaching the standing and recognition which the Methodism of Schenectady so abundantly enjoys today. In seeking the causes for the

² It was originally intended to follow the present chapter, with one on "Persecution," but space forbids anything further than a footnote. Early Methodism everywhere met with opposition, in some places amounting to persecution that jeopardized life. Schenectady was no exception, and the little Methodist company that met weekly in class and prayer meeting, first in private houses and afterwards in their humble unfinished meeting-house, were the constant victims of annoyance and even riotous efforts to break up their meetings. The story is still told among her descendants how the wife of Richard Clute was accustomed to stand on the steps before her door, while a prayer meeting was in progress in an upper room, and hold in check a crowd of the college students among whom it was a favorite pastime to attend a Methodist meeting and break up worship with boisterous mock participation in it. As late as 1824 we have the record of an annoyance from students that amounted to a riot. So serious was it that the New York Annual Conference took the matter up, and the published report of their investigating committee may be found in the volume of the "Methodist Magazine" for 1825, pp. 489-90. The two chief offenders were brought to trial January 18, 1825, before the court of General Sessions in this city, found guilty by the jury and the judge imposed what was, for those days, a heavy fine on each. Nevertheless three years later, the pastor of this church, George Coles, speaks of disturbances at a series of revival meetings that he was conducting. In his book, "My Later Years," he gives an amusing account of how one would-be tormenter came to grief. "One, more valiant and less prudent than the rest, undertook to check the ardor of the worshippers by throwing a bucket of cold water on them. In his haste he raised his hands too high; the water struck the ceiling overhead and came down on his own pate."

The persecution that converts had frequently to endure in their own families and from former friends was also severe. Young people were sometimes flogged by their parents for attending Methodist meetings, and, if they persisted, it was not unknown for them to be driven from home. Even men of mature life suffered hardship if they professed conversion and joined this church. A conspicuous example of this is Colonel Zegar Van Santvoord, converted in the great revival of 1819, described in this chapter. A very complete account of his experiences, written by the Rev. Daniel Brayton, pastor here 1824, 1825, is given in the "Methodist Magazine" for 1825, pp. 114-123. His steadfast faith bore him through triumphantly and his godly life was consecrated to the most untiring labors for Christ and the church. His last words were those of Addison: "Call all my friends, call all the city to see how a Christian can die." The memoir of another faithful Christian worker of the early days of this church, Mr. William Burnham, died 1822, was published in the "Methodist Magazine" of that year, pp. 157-159. An account of "Mother Burnham," his widow, is given in Coles' "My Later Years," pp. 21, 22.

slow growth of Methodism down to the pastorate of Noah Leving in the new church in Liberty street, we have constantly to keep in mind the words with which Freeborn Garretson, in 1789, described the situation in Schenectady: "Prejudice hath taken deep root in the hearts of these people."

We possess no detailed account of any of the revivals in this church prior to the great awakening during the pastorate of William Thatcher, (1818, 1819). Fortunately, we have Mr. Thatcher's own account of the work, given in a letter to the "Methodist Magazine" and published in the number of that review for July, 1819. Copies of the "Methodist Magazine" of that date are now exceedingly rare, and the preservation of so valuable a fragment of our history will justify the reproduction here of the entire letter.

"A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF SCHENECTADY.

To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.

"On entering upon the duties of my charge, after the Conference of May, 1818, I found a society consisting of fifty-four members, all in peace, but low in the exercise of religion. The congregation was small, and most of them appeared indifferent to the great work of salvation. Through the summer, the only visible alteration for the better was an increasing assembly of hearers; and it was also remarked, that those who had been in the habit of leaving the house as soon as the preacher became plain and energetic in addressing them, would now sit and hear with attention, and some appearance of concern: but all prospects seemed to wither by reason of the general lukewarmness of the society; a room ten feet square was amply sufficient for any prayer-meeting we could assemble.

"Under these discouraging circumstances, I cried to God day and night for help: I summoned my brethren to the help of the Lord, but with little apparent effect. But in the latter part of August, it pleased God to give me an intimation in my own soul, by his holy spirit, that he was ready to revive his work.

"Things continued with but little variation till some time in December, when the spirit of faith and prayer began to revive, and new fire to enkindle among the members of society. New-year's eve, observed as a Watchnight, was a memorable season. The largest proportion of the assembly that night, tarried 'till after twelve o'clock, that I ever before saw: it was found that conviction had made its inroads among the assembly, and numbers carried home a sense of their guilt, and in distress of soul began to pray for mercy. Sabbath Jan. 3, was an auspicious day; every part of the exercise was attended with increasing measures of the divine unction; and after the evening sermon I notified a prayer-meeting to conclude the exercises of the day, and requested all who did not prefer to tarry an hour longer, to withdraw, and the remainder of the congregation to seat themselves in the lower part of the meeting-house; but although they attempted to comply, there was not room for all below. In the introduction of the prayer-meeting, I simply gave liberty for such as were in distress, and would esteem it a privilege to present themselves before the altar to be particularly prayed for, to come forward there and kneel down; and more than half a dozen volunteered immediately, and soon the house resounded with their cries. Thus the work made its first appearance, and although it progressed moderately, it was deep and genuine. On the seventeenth of that month I first let down the net for a draught, and received fourteen: repeated additions succeeded in February, March and April, till the amount received was about sixty-seven.

"One peculiarity of this work was, that a large proportion of its subjects were heads of families, mostly in middle or advanced life; some who had long stood in religious profession, but had, till then, remained strangers to experimental religion; some whose lives had been notoriously irregular became subjects of renewing grace, and others had an old experience made over anew: the subjects of the work also were in general made partakers of a clear and bright witness of the spirit, and became very bold for God. A very general conviction seemed

to spread in the congregation at large, and the prospect is, that with many, this may issue in a saving change.

"The most direct instrument of awakening sinners, has been the word preached: and never was I more aided in that glorious employment than in Schenectady. Plain and pointed preaching has cut through the ranks of sinners, like a two-edged sword. The subjects of awakening mostly found deliverance in times of private, social, or public prayer.

"I close this in hope that a second account may yet gratify the readers of the Methodist Magazine.

Your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM THATCHER."

The second letter promised by Mr. Thatcher appeared in the volume of the "Methodist Magazine" for 1820. From this we learn that the revival had continued through the second year of his pastorate, and that the fire which had been kindled on the Methodist altar had been carried to the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches until the whole city was rejoicing in a great spiritual awakening. This second letter, written after Mr. Thatcher had left Schenectady for another charge, is in part as follows:

"MESSRS. BANGS & MASON:

Your nineteenth number contains an account [the letter reprinted above] of a revival of religion in the city of Schenectady which took place during the preceding winter and spring. This year, also, the gracious work has been, for some months budding and blossoming among the multitudes that frequented our house of worship. Our pious neighbors of the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Churches, observing this, flew to the help of the Lord, and their indefatigable activity and perseverance, I think, were of great use. Agreeing to let predestination sleep, their preaching, their exhortations and their fervent prayers were more like the Methodists than the people of their order, in that city, had ever before witnessed. Revivals of religion were now no longer termed Methodist delusion, and the subjects of grace were no more called *crazy*. The people submitted to the

order in which God saw fit to work. In the beginning of April, God, in his infinite goodness, poured out his spirit more plentifully upon the congregation of my charge; about twenty penitents kneeled at the altar in supplications for mercy and about half of them were brought into gospel liberty, which I thus state as a sample of the order of the work. While other denominations were gathering their harvest of souls, our little Zion flourished like the palm-tree, and our converts grew like the willows by the water-courses. In the midst of these happy days, my term of service expired, after an increase of the members of my charge of seventy-six souls; and I had to force myself from one of the most blessed revivals that I had ever before witnessed. Thus closed my two years labour, with a most affectionate people, consisting of fifty-four members when I took the oversight of them in 1818, and took leave of them after a net gain of one hundred and forty souls: which causes my soul to magnify the Lord, and my spirit to rejoice in God my Saviour.

"To aid me in this important work, the people of my charge were zealously engaged in prayer and class-meetings, and all the means of grace. Such are the methods, which I trust God will never fail to bless. May his glorious work continue to prosper, until all shall join in ascribing *glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will to men.*

WILLIAM THATCHER."³

NEW YORK, June 12, 1820.

No better presentation of the religious life of our church, during the period under consideration, is possible than the one given in the above two contemporaneous letters, and we may safely assume that the picture there given was true of our church under nearly all the pastorates of those early days although it is probable that few others, perhaps none, witnessed awakenings so extraordinary in character. Dr. McKean speaks of the revivals under a number of the preacher's in charge, making particular mention of the interest shown during the ministry of Rev. Samuel Luckey (1820, 1821), "he was," says Dr. McKean, "a special favorite with the young, who often

³ For account given in this volume of Mr. Thatcher, see pp. 40, 41.

thronged the church to hear his discourses, and, listening to them, many youthful hearts were led to feel their need of a Saviour. While he was here, the church was strengthened by the addition of a goodly number who were converted under his ministry.”⁴

⁴ “Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady,” p. 17. Like many other early Methodist revivals, those in this church were, at times, the scenes of jubilant enthusiasm that not unseldom ran into what we to-day would regard as boisterous confusion. Those were the days of “the shouting Methodist” and of “the power.” No less cultured a man than George Coles tells us how in a prayer-meeting in this church he had “a shock of the divine power.” He says: “I gave myself up to the impulses of the good Spirit, praising God with all my might, was taken off my feet, lost my strength, and fell to the floor. I was entirely unconscious for a while, but when consciousness returned, I felt full of love and joy and peace. Passage after passage of Scripture came to my mind with a clearness and beauty and sweetness which I had never before realized. It was a glorious time. A gust of heavenly influence coming upon us, brought three more persons to the floor, and caused others to shout aloud for joy.” “My Later Years,” pp. 46, 47.

The Rev. Buel Goodsell, father of Bishop Goodsell, succeeded Mr. Coles as pastor here, and he set himself to effect a reform in the manner of conducting meetings. “He met with considerable opposition for a while. Some suggested to him that these efforts gave evidence of a want of piety on his part. Nothing daunted, he persevered until he wrought a most beneficial change.” “Rise and Progress of Methodism in Schenectady,” p. 21.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW CHURCH

Sometime about the year 1819, the ground on which the first meeting house stood was needed by the state for the Erie Canal, and the church building was removed, it will be remembered, in a northeasterly direction and made to face on Union street. There is no record of how much the state paid the trustees for the land required by the canal, nor how much the new location for the church cost. Indeed, it is possible that the original lot, belonging to the church, extended from Liberty to Union streets and embraced all the land now occupied by the canal, the Arcade and the tracks of the New York Central and Delaware and Hudson railroads. If this were the case, the trustees had merely to move the building to the northeast corner of their own property.

The year 1834 came, and, once again, the Methodist meeting house stood in the way of progress. This time, it was the projected railroad from Schenectady to Utica, the first railroad planned for the interior of the state, that needed the church land for its track way. The offer of the railroad company to buy the property was the determining factor in favor of a movement that had, for several years, been under discussion, viz., to sell the Union street site and build a larger church.

It will be remembered that one of the conditions attached to the endowment of 1819 was that no part of the principal of "the City Fund for the Support of the Gospel" was ever to be used for any purpose whatsoever. Now with the gigantic problem of building a new church confronting them, the trustees were convinced that this city fund would best fulfill the purpose which the donors originally had in mind if put into a church edifice where the gospel could be more effectively preached. They had, moreover, the very pardonable ambition to erect a house of worship that would worthily represent Methodism and give it an enhanced dignity and standing in the city. They decided, therefore, to petition the Common



The Church in Liberty Street in 1836 (upper picture); same in
1901 (lower)

Some Trustees of the Period 1835-40

Upper—Left to right: Hiram Moore Secretary; James Renagles; Peter Bunker,
Superintendent of Building the Church

Lower: Stephen A. Daggett; James D. Felthousen

Council for permission thus to divert the endowment of 1819. The Minutes of the Common Council of the city, under date of September 16th, 1834, contains the following, relative to this petition:

"A petition of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this city, praying that a certain bond entered into by the trustees of said church to the former corporation of this city may be cancelled, having been read and considered,

Resolved that the bond, or obligation, of the trustees of said church, relative to the appropriation of the avails, or income, of certain lands granted to the said church be cancelled, and that the treasurer be authorized to deliver up the said bond to the trustees of said church agreeably to the prayer of the said petition.

ABM. VAN INGEN, *Clerk.*"

The trustees had every reason to feel gratified at the success of their petition. \$850.00 of the fund were used to purchase the house of J. Horsfall, on the south side of Union street, near Jay street, for a parsonage. There was now a steady movement towards the disposal of the old church site, the purchase of a new one, and the formulation of plans for the erection of the new church. December 12th, 1834, the sale of the Union street lot to the Schenectady and Utica Railway Company was authorized, the price set being \$3,200.00 with the church and vestry buildings reserved. February 27th following, a lot on Liberty street was bought for \$1,450.00. May 9th, an architect was engaged at a wage of \$2.00 a day. Peter Bunker was appointed building superintendent, and the Board of Trustees voted themselves, as a whole, into a building committee. The following was, also, moved and carried:

"Resolved that the time has now arrived when the erection of the new church ought to commence." The work of excavation was at once begun. Three months and one day later, we come to the following record in the Minutes:

"The corner-stone of the new house in Liberty street, erected for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was laid by

the Hon. Archibald L. Linn, Mayor of the city of Schenectady, August 10th, 1835, at six o'clock, P. M."

Then follows this list of persons and things, part of it amusingly abbreviated, when taken in connection with its accompanying foot-note:

"Members of the Board of Common Council.
 County judge, sheriff and clerk.
 Official members of the church.
 Reflector and Schenectady Democrat.
 Schenectady Cabinet.
 Methodist Almanack for 1835 & Discipline.
 Christian Advocate and Journal.
 Catalogue of Columbia College.
 City Laws, Trades Union Constitution.
 Paper Catalogue of the Female Seminary.
 (The above were deposited under the corner stone.)"¹

It would be interesting to follow the details of the building operations, but space forbids.² The work occupied the following nine months, and in May, 1836, (the day of the month not given) the church was dedicated, the Rev. John Kennedy, D.D., of New York preaching the dedicatory sermon. Methodism had now a church home second to none in Schenectady; indeed it was the opinion of many that the new Methodist Church in Liberty street was the finest house of worship in the city.

The trustees devised a novel scheme for paying the debt that remained after the completion of the building. The committee appointed to formulate the plan brought in their report at a meeting held May 24th and their recommendations were adopted. The report, in part, was as follows:

¹ During the Centennial Celebration, May 2nd-12th, 1907, the consent of the present owners of the old church in Liberty street was secured to search for the corner stone and, if found, to remove it and secure the "Common Council, County Judge" and all other persons and things contained therein; but the search was fruitless, the corner stone could not be located.

² Moreover, our chief source of information on the business life of the church fails us here. The first volume of Minutes of the Board of Trustees closes with the account of the meeting of November 25th, 1835, and the first entry in the second volume is under date of May 24th, 1836. There are, therefore, six months in the life of our church concerning which we know nothing.

"The amount of debt on the church building, when completed, will not be less than \$5,600 or thereabouts. Your committee are of the opinion that a price ought to be fixed upon each pew, in proportion to its value from its location in the house, to meet the amount above stated; and that a quit rent should also be put upon each seat, or pew, sufficient to pay the salary of the preacher in charge."

The form of lease prepared and printed for this purpose recited at length the rights and privileges of the two contracting parties, going into such minute details as to prescribe the color of the cushion that the pewholder might place in his seat. "And provided further, that if the said party of the second part, his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, shall at any time hereafter place a cushion in said pew, the color of said cushion shall be blue, to correspond with the back of said pew." It was also provided that "one third part of the purchase money shall be on the delivery of the lease, one third part in four months, and the other third part in eight months, with interest."

Briefly put, it will be seen that the trustees sold the pews and then collected an annual quit rent in addition, much the same as the city might sell a piece of real estate and annually thereafter collect taxes from the buyer. The highest priced pews were \$75.00 with a yearly quit rent of \$11.25; the cheapest pews were \$24.00 with a quit rent of \$3.75 a year. There were one hundred and thirty-two pews, one of which was assigned to the preacher's family and there were six free pews. Had the trustees succeeded in selling all those put on sale, they would have had sufficient money to liquidate their indebtedness, while the quit rents would have taken care of the preacher's salary.

It is very evident, however, that the plan was not an entire success. For a long time afterwards a considerable part of the debt remained and the church had a severe and protracted struggle with the problems that it occasioned. Perhaps it was not altogether an unmixed evil, because it brought to the church the discovery of a new element of financial strength and helpfulness.

Women have always held a prominent place in the spiritual life of Methodism. In the earlier days, however, they had very little voice in the management of its temporal affairs. "At a meeting of the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Schenectady" is the oft recurring phrase with which the clerk begins his minutes of the early business meetings of our church.

The Discipline forbade the women sitting with the men, even the male members of their own families, at the church services. In the early editions of the Discipline, in the section on the order to be observed in churches, we read:

"*Quest. 2* Is there any exception to the rule, 'Let the men and women sit apart?'

Ans^w. There is no exception,—Let them sit apart in all our churches."

Probably this rule had never been habitually enforced in the local church, and the attempt that one preacher made to live up to the Discipline resulted in disaster to him. In 1832, the Rev. Salmon Stebbins was pastor. Our Mr. Giles S. Barhydt recalls him as a man "stubborn of purpose, fond of display, and rigorous in executing his authority." Mr. Stebbins was resolved that the men and women should sit apart according to the rule of the Discipline. "He succeeded in effecting his purpose," says Mr. Barhydt who distinctly remembers the incident, "although it generated hard feeling and developed a good deal of sulking and opposition. Families were separated, and, for a few Sabbaths, members sat staring, grinning, and exchanging looks with each other from opposite sides of the church. But the result was unfavorable; old habits could not easily be broken up. The next year, Stebbins was sent elsewhere and the old order of things was restored."³

In 1838, "the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Schenectady" were feeling very heavily

³ See *Daily Union*, February 26th, 1887. Mr. Barhydt also says that "As a preacher, Stebbins was much liked. He was possessed of a liberal share of that rude eloquence which formed so great a charm of many of the old preachers." That his one year pastorate must have been successful is shown by the Conference Minutes, where it appears that, under his ministry the church gained 103 new members, the largest increase in any single year of its history down to Noah Leving's time.

the burden of debt, and their extremity became the women's opportunity. The latter organized a "Ladies' Benevolent Aid Society," held a fair, realizing therefrom a goodly sum. Under date of October 22nd, the trustees put themselves on record as follows:

"Resolved that the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church return their sincere thanks to the ladies of the Benevolent Aid Society attached to the same and all others who kindly assisted in the fair lately held in this city for receiving from them, as part of proceeds, the sum of \$481.63 to aid in liquidating the debt on the church."

This entry is interesting as the first recorded recognition of woman's work in the history of our church. The following year another fair was held, and the ladies gave the trustees \$445.32, receiving in exchange "a vote of thanks to the female aid society for their liberal donation to aid in the liquidation of the debt on the church." Evidently thinking that they had not done their full duty by "the female aid society," the trustees passed another resolution, at the same meeting, thanking them again "for their unceasing efforts" and ordering that the resolution, signed by the president and secretary of the Board, "be published in the two city papers."

In common with the custom of the times, there was a graveyard connected with the first Methodist meeting house in Union street. When that land was sold and the church site on Liberty street bought, the bodies were taken up and reburied in the rear of the new church. Regulations concerning this burial ground were, from time to time, enacted by the trustees. One of the most curiously worded is the following to be found in the minutes of the meeting held August 12th, 1839.

"Resolved that any person, not a member or a seat-holder in the Methodist Episcopal Church, wishing their friends in the church yard, shall pay the sum of five dollars for each adult person, and two dollars and fifty cents for each child."

"*Wishing their friends in the church yard*" is surely a fine touch of unconscious humor.

Two years previous to this, the trustees had authorized a list of prices which the sexton was allowed to charge at

funerals. This list, we are told, was "a copy from the Dutch Church sexton with some alterations." The list is as follows:

Ringing bell	\$.62½
Hearse and cloth, horse and driver	1 75
For digging graves from the first of April until November 20th	
Single coffin	75
Double coffin	1.00
For child under 12 years, single	50
For child under 12 years, double	75
For digging graves from November 20th to April 1st.	
Single	1 50
Double	1 75
For children under 12, single	1.00
For children under 12, double	1.25
For inviting bearers	.50
For attending funerals and filling up graves	75
For inviting people in general and the bearers	1 00

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT PREACHER

That the Schenectady Methodist Church, after the completion of the house of worship in Liberty street, was regarded as one of the most desirable appointments in Troy Conference is evident from the fact that, in 1836, there was sent here as the pastor of our church that prince of Troy Conference preachers, Noah Levings. We shall begin our study of this great man with an estimate written by a member of our own church who was converted under his preaching during that memorable pastorate of 1836, 1837. Mr. Giles S. Barhydt, in the paper prepared for our centennial celebration last May, has this to say in regard to the man who seventy years ago led him to Christ:

"The year 1836 was the most memorable year in the history of Methodism in Schenectady. Noah Levings entered upon his work here, and the result was all that had been hoped for. A great revival followed, and about two hundred persons were converted, among them the writer, who is, probably, of that two hundred, the only one living.¹ The cause of Methodism was greatly advanced, and the church here took a position of dignity and influence such as it never before had occupied. Noah Levings was decidedly the ablest, as he was the most successful in attracting people, of all the Schenectady divines of that day. Every Sunday, the church, including the aisles and gallery, was crowded with interested hearers. His preaching was extemporaneous and his language copious and fluent. He always spoke earnestly and with great animation; at times, he rose to lofty flights of eloquence, and then his countenance seemed literally to become luminous and radiant with the light of the upper sanctuary. He was always at his ease, his gestures were natural and his illustrations apt and striking."

One of the most precious treasures of this church is a

¹ For a further notice of this revival see Miss Minette H. Hegeman's Centennial paper in Part Three of this volume, at p. 127.

small blank book partially filled with notes on class leaders' meetings in the handwriting of Noah Levings.² The book is highly valuable on that account and also because it gives us a picture of the spiritual life of our church during two most interesting years of its history. We here see that then, as now, there were those that were careless and derelict in their religious duties; but we also see that then, more than at present, such persons were held to strict account and, if reformation was not soon apparent, they were "laid aside," a gentle way of saying that they were dropped from the roll of church membership. Here are some passages from Noah Levings' book, as entered under different dates during his two years' pastorate. It will be noted that they cover a variety of subjects, all of which had come before him and the class leaders for consideration. In all cases of proper names, initials are substituted.

"July 11, 1836. J. B. reported to be guilty of drinking.

"The class rooms in the new church being nearly ready for occupancy, the class leaders proceeded to make choice of them.

"The trustees being present, it was recommended to them to establish a sinking fund for liquidating the church debt.

"Sept. 5. W S. was complained of for non-payment of debt. Complaint by J. F. I recommended arbitration.

"Oct. 17 It was decided to allow the teacher of the singing school of the church to use such instruments as he may deem necessary, but no instrument of music shall be introduced into the worship of God on the Sabbath.

"Nov. 7. The subject of a prayer-meeting on Sunday evening, after the sermon, was brought up and the brethren agreed to assist.

"After inquiring after the state of the classes and the probationers, I distributed the tickets for the third quarter.

"It was agreed to admit none to the singing school who are not permanent members of our congregation.

"Dec. 26. The cases of S. P. of class No. 6 and of A. M. P. were brought up for consideration. It was stated

² The book contains, also, similar notes in the hand-writing of the Rev. Truman Seymour (1835), who seems to have originated the idea of holding class leaders' meetings, and of the Rev. Ephraim Coss (1838, 1839), during whose pastorate the meetings were evidently discontinued.



NOAH LEVINGS, D. D.

that neither of them attended class and they did not believe in class meetings. They are to be visited and labored with.

"March 10, 1837. There having been no leaders' meeting January and February in consequence of the great revival then in progress, business for both months was attended to.

"It was determined to take up weekly class collections for the purpose of sinking the debt of the church, the money to be paid over to the treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

"April 24. Resolved that we hereafter dispense with the third sermon, and, in place thereof, hold a prayer-meeting in the lecture room. This resolution was passed in consequence of the preacher reporting himself unable, for want of health, to preach three times.

"May 28. Closed up the business of the Conference year and left the brethren in a good state of religious feeling, and with mutual prayers for the blessing of God.

"June 12. The names of forty-two persons were reported by the leaders as delinquent in attending class. It was agreed that these delinquents should be labored with for the present month, after which, if they do not attend to their duty, they are to be laid aside for a breach of our rules.³

"July 10. Six persons were laid aside for willful and habitual neglect of class, they having been duly notified.

"Sept. 4. Complaint was made against J. T that he did not attend class at all. Having been cited to appear at the leaders' meeting for trial, he was told that if he desires to continue in the church, he must attend class regularly and no longer spend his time in idleness.

"Dec. 18. It was resolved that we commence holding prayer-meetings at the close of the sermon on Sabbath evenings, and that we begin protracted meetings with the new year.

"March 26, 1838. The case of S. P. L. who had for some time been neglecting class came up. Having been cited to appear before the leaders, he was present and made statements and an explanation to the meeting, whereupon it was

³ Very likely the greater part of this large number of "delinquents" were probationers taken in during the revival of the preceding winter. Of the two hundred conversions, estimated by Mr. Barhydt above, it would not be surprising if a considerable number soon grew lukewarm and indifferent.

resolved that Brother L's explanation be accepted as satisfactory.

"May 28. J. H. C. cited to appear for trial for neglect of class. His case came up. After hearing the testimony of his leader and others, it was resolved that he be laid aside for neglect of duty—carried."

A clearer and more accurate conception of the every day life of our church seventy years ago, can be formed from the above extracts than is possible to the reader in any other way. They were written by an unimpeachable authority and in the very midst of the events that they chronicle from month to month. It is difficult to keep in mind, as we read them, that these petty, commonplace things occupied the thought of a man of such greatness and celebrity as Noah Levings. But, perhaps, it was this very quality of his character, his ability to attend with scrupulous care and painstaking patience to the little things of church life, that was one of the secrets of his success.

It is difficult to analyze such a character as his, or to write a fair estimate of the man. He was so universally popular and is everywhere spoken of in such terms of almost reverential laudation, that one would be inclined to believe that there must be some exaggeration about all this praise, did not its very universality preclude such a suspicion. Noah Levings' ministerial brethren loved to call him "the golden mouthed orator of Troy Conference," long after his reputation had gone abroad over all the nation, as if they desired to reserve for Troy Conference the honor of giving the church such a man. There must have been a great sweetness and lovable ness of nature about him that endeared him to all of them to such a degree that no one harbored any envy or jealousy on account of the pre-eminence that he held among them.⁴ Those in-

⁴ In this sweetness and lovable ness of character, Noah Levings and Coles Carpenter seem closely to have resembled each other. Mr. Carpenter lacked the other's commanding intellectual qualities, but in the charm and attractiveness of manner, Noah Levings was in no whit the superior of his well-beloved predecessor.

We note, also, in Noah Levings that tender love for childhood, which was so conspicuous a characteristic of George Coles. When he lay dying in the home of a friend in Cincinnati, the children of the family were brought to him to receive his blessing. The great loving heart of the dying man was deeply touched. Taking them each by the hand, he said, "God bless the dear children and make them holy." These were Noah Levings' last words.

tered enough in the man to know the interesting story of his life from apprenticeship in a blacksmith's shop in Troy to the position of honor that he held at the time of his death can easily find that story; we have space here only for a few estimates of him by men of prominence who knew him well. Dr. Luckey, an earlier pastor of this church, whose estimate of men has already been cited in this volume, tells how Noah Levings preached in his church one evening on the text, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." After service, a large number of young people came up to speak with the preacher of the evening, and Dr. Luckey left him talking with them. Returning a little later, he found about forty kneeling at the altar and Noah Levings praying with them. A number of the forty were converted then and there.

Bishop Morris who preached a funeral discourse on Noah Levings before the New York Conference at Poughkeepsie, May, 1849, speaks at length of the universal affection that he inspired wherever he was known. The best biographical sketch of Noah Levings is that of D. W Clark, afterwards Bishop Clark, published in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for October, 1849. Dr. Clark devotes two paragraphs to an account of Noah Levings' pastorate in Schenectady. We quote both.

"At the ensuing annual conference he was stationed in Schenectady. The society here had just erected a new and beautiful church; and Methodism was assuming a position and an importance in the place that it had not previously had. Accordingly, in entering upon his charge, he felt that a great responsibility rested upon him. The character of Methodism in the place was to receive a new stamp, and the work of God a new impulse; its altered and improving circumstances required the development and right direction of new elements of moral power. Entering upon his work with these views and feelings, he prosecuted it with unwearied diligence and with great success. The congregation was greatly increased in numbers, and also improved in character. The membership of the church rose from one hundred and ninety-one to

three hundred and fifteen; and to his services Methodism is not a little indebted for its character and standing even at the present day.

"From some cause or other, some of the society in Schenectady were very much opposed to the preacher appointed by the conference to succeed him. Seeing only evil to the society, as well as to the preacher, in this opposition, his generous heart impelled him to throw himself between the people and preacher, and his fertile mind readily found a way to do it effectually. He reached home on Saturday, and, while the tones of discontent and dissatisfaction were heard all around him, he entered the pulpit the next day, (the preacher not having arrived) and preached in the morning from,—‘But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’’” (Luke xix, 14.) In the afternoon he took for his text,—“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” (Isa. liii, 1.) Those who have marked the fertility of his mind, the facility with which he adapted himself to circumstances, can well conceive how these two subjects were employed on this occasion. Suffice it to say, no murmur of discontent was afterwards heard. The preacher was well received, laboured in harmony with the people, and the result of his first year's labour was a net increase of seventy-five members; and a year later the same society reported to the conference a membership of four hundred and fifty, showing a net increase of one hundred and thirty-five in two years.”⁵

Dr. Levings' pastorate here marks an important stage in the development of Methodism in our city. Mr. Giles S. Barhydt has pointed this out in his centennial paper, already quoted. From the year 1838, when Noah Levings left Schenectady, until the present time, our church has never de-

⁵ The preacher here referred to was Ephraim Goss (1838, 1839). The Troy Conference Minutes for 1867 speaks of Mr. Goss as a man of few words, industrious and faithful, filling many important appointments and “leading hundreds of souls to Christ.” Speaking of Mr. Goss' pastorate here, Mr. Giles S. Barhydt says: “He so seemed to fear the result of the contrast between himself and Levings that he exerted himself to the utmost; and such was his earnestness that he made up in zeal what he lacked of the more popular and shining qualities of his predecessor. If the labors of Levings had been blessed in large accessions to the church, those of Goss were scarcely less so.” “Reminiscences of an Old Citizen” in *Daily Union*, March 5th, 1887.

clined from the commanding position that he gave it. In 1839, universal Methodism celebrated its centennial. That year Episcopal Methodism in Schenectady, as an organized church, was only thirty-two years old, but its people, who had been no people in 1807, now outnumbered the communicants of any other church in the city.⁶ They had a church edifice that was second to none, and were in the van in all things making for spiritual progress and the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness. Richard Clute and his wife, Mary McMichael, to whom more than to any other human agency, the church of 1807 owed its life, were still living, and the prophecy of the former uttered in the first days of the little society had been, in good measure, fulfilled: "Our Methodist people in Schenectady are now weak and few, but God is with us and, if our zeal faint not, we shall some day be many and strong."

⁶ Referring again to Miss Hegeman's paper (p. 127), we find that, in 1839, the membership of the Reformed Dutch Church was 363; St. George's Episcopal, 142; Baptist, about 280; the Presbyterian, 384; the Methodist Episcopal, exactly 400. See p. 151 for the record of church membership, 1807-1907.

EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS

(A Defense written in the Centennial year, 1839.)

"Who were the first apostles of the gospel? Who were the moral heroes that went forth and conquered the world? Were they the wise and learned and noble and influential ones of earth? So far from this, they were tax-gathers, tent-makers, and fishermen—men of no rank, men of no wealth, men destitute of human learning, men having no weapons but those which were spiritual; yet, before these men, hosts of opposers gave way, and all the wealth and wisdom, the pride and prejudice, the power and policy of the world could not arrest the progress of the gospel which they proclaimed.

"In like manner, we would inquire: Who were the instruments employed by God in disseminating that form of Christianity called Methodism and 'spreading Scriptural holiness over the world?' Were they the men that human wisdom and policy would have selected for such an enterprise? Were they taken from the seats of learning and the circles of worldly influence? No! generally the reverse of this. The great body of Methodist preachers, both in England and America, were called from the ordinary occupations of life and possessed but few advantages; they were taken from the plough and the anvil, from the bench and the loom. They possessed, however, the great essential—the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They embodied their principles in their lives. While their enemies were dealing out their invectives and decrying them as illiterate and inefficient, they went forward, indifferent to the clamours and persecutions excited against them, and now they point to hundred of thousands of converts as their epistles, read and known of all men.

"We admit that they were not a learned ministry, but that they were an ignorant ministry, we are unwilling to admit. We should distinguish between an unlearned and an ignorant ministry. As a body, they were not read in the learning of the schools; but they were skilled in all things connected with conversion to God, and with religious experience and practice, and, in these respects, they were unsurpassed by any ministry since the days of the apostles. Preaching, as they did, three, or more, times a day in private houses, on the highways, in the fields, they compassed the length and the breadth of the land, both in England and America, until

'The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shouted to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains caught the flying joy.'

From a sermon preached by Rev. J. Leonard Gilder in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Allen Street, New York, October, 25th, 1839, on the occasion of the celebration of the Centennial of Methodism.



BENJAMIN HENRY RIPTON

PART SECOND

FROM THE CENTENNIAL YEAR OF METHODISM, 1839,
TO THE CENTENNIAL YEAR OF THIS CHURCH, 1907

BY BENJAMIN H. RIPTON, PH.D., LL.D.

Church Records Covering this Period

- I. Minutes of the Board of Trustees: 1 May 24, 1836 to April 25, 1853. 2. From June 8, 1853.
- II. Minutes of the Quarterly Conference: 1 June 23, 1838 to May 14, 1850. 2. June 25, 1850 to June 11, 1869. 3. June 11, 1869 to February 20, 1900. 4. 1900 to 1902. 5. May 29, 1902 to April 3, 1906.
- III. Minutes of the Leaders and Stewards Meetings, June 2, 1845 to December 5, 1849.
- IV Minutes of the Official Board: 1 January 16, 1865 to September 15, 1884. 2. October 13, 1884 to December 4, 1899. 3. January 1, 1900 to November 1, 1905. 4. From 1905.
- V Church Records (Members, etc.): 1 1853 to 1869. 2. 1869 to 1880. 3. 1890 to 1896. 4. From 1896.
- VI. Records of the Sunday School: 1. April 12, 1872 to May 12, 1897 2. From 1897
- VII. Treasurer's Accounts: 1 June, 1844 to June, 1854. 2. June, 1854 to March, 1881 3. April, 1881 to September, 1894. 4. From October, 1894.
- VIII. Account Book of the Recording Steward, 1838 to 1843.
- IX. Record of Seats Rented, 1844 to 1856.
- X. Account of Lots in the Burial Ground.
- XI. Records of the Church Building Fund Association.
- XII. Treasurer's Accounts with the Building Fund Association: 1 June, 1865 to August, 1870. 2. From August, 1870.
- XIII. Treasurer's Accounts with Subscribers to the Building Fund Association.
- XIV. Original Subscription to the Church Building Fund.
- XV Pledges made at the Dedication of the State Street Church.
- XVI. Financial Record of Members, 1872 to 1876.

This church was organized in 1807, growing out of sermons preached in Schenectady by Thomas Webb, a British officer, in 1766; by George Whitefield in 1770; by Freeborn Garrettson and other itinerant preachers in 1789 and the following years.

Corner stone of first house of worship laid July 28, 1808; second church edifice erected 1835-6; third building dedicated March 12, 1874.

Society incorporated September 6, 1808, and again June 17, 1819, as the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Schenectady; for a time popularly known as the State Street Methodist Episcopal Church; by Act of Legislature, January, 1907, name changed to the First Methodist Episcopal Church.

One hundredth anniversary of the organization of the church observed May 2-12, 1907.

Inscription on the Captain Thomas Webb Club Centennial Tablet.

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH IN LIBERTY STREET

In 1839, Methodists all over the world were celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Methodist societies. In Schenectady the church had recently erected a new building which marked the culmination of an era of progress. There was a debt upon it of \$5,600, but its members might reasonably hope for a steady advance in prosperity and influence. It does not appear that this hope was realized. There are many indications that the twelve years following 1839 were years of stagnation and, in some respects, of decline. At the beginning of this period and until 1849 the membership of the church was not recorded in the conference minutes as members in full standing and probationers, but as "white" and "colored." In 1839 the total membership was 400, 390 white and 10 colored. In the next year, it was 593; in 1842, it had fallen to 375 and in 1843 it had risen to 704, 684 white and 20 colored. This sudden increase was due, as we learn from a statement in the "*Annals of Albany*"¹ to the Millerite excitement of the preceding year, when multitudes became suddenly religious in the belief that the end of the world was at hand. The piety of fear was not permanent; the church suffered greatly from the unwholesome excitement and the reaction that followed. In every year down to 1850 the membership decreased, and in that year the decrease was sixty notwithstanding the fact that in 1849 there had been forty probationers. In 1850 the number of full members was 225, and of probationers, 25.

One who reads the church records of the first decade of the Liberty street church is impressed with the thought that the church was not at its best. This is especially true of the impression produced by reading the minutes of the meetings of the board of trustees; financial difficulties were a constant care, the burden of church management was almost too great,

¹ Vol. 8, p. 347.

and resignations were not uncommon. An idea of some of the difficulties may be obtained from two extracts from a single page of the book of minutes. At a meeting held June 19, 1843 the only record of business is as follows: "Minitis of the last meeting red & approved. A partition from the committee of the Common Counsell asking the use of Our Church for the selerbration of the 4 July next which it was Lost." One week later, June 26, the regular meeting was held and considerable business transacted. One of the resolutions passed was this: "that the committe to get the Subscriptions for the delinkuins of the debt on the Church be realeased from fother duty."

Then and for long after, the general business of the church, most of which is now under the charge of the official board and its committees, was conducted by the trustees. The trustees performed their duties with great faithfulness and held themselves and others to their obligations with a strictness which seems to us to pass sometimes into severity. Stated meetings were held every month, with special meetings when needed. The attendance was usually good, for a fine of twelve and one-half cents was imposed upon trustees who were ten minutes late, and of twenty-five cents upon those who were absent during the meeting. In December, 1839, after it had been ordered "that the clerk make out the bill of fines against the delinquent trustees for the past year and hand them over to the president of the board for collection," it is recorded that "C. L. Barhydt, James Reagles and L. W. Lacy paid their fines, twenty-five cents each." In February, 1842, "A resolution was offered that when any member of this board shall be absent from the city during any meeting of the board, such member be excused, which was lost." But in October, 1843, the board relaxed the rigidity of its rule sufficiently to permit an absent member to offer a "reasonable excuse." In Junè, 1847, the bye-laws were amended to provide that the fine of twenty-five cents should be paid by any member arriving fifteen minutes after the hour set for the beginning of the meeting, and at the next meeting W. H. Beal was fined twenty-five cents ac-



Schenectady in 1839 (From an Old Print)

This view shows the appearance of the city from the elevation on which stand the present Union College buildings. The old college buildings on College street may be seen in center of picture; on the extreme right, the old Mohawk bridge. The two church spires, close together, are those of the Presbyterian (left) and Episcopal churches. Farther to the left, appears the Dutch church (burned in 1863).

Near the left side of the picture, may be seen the low square tower of the Methodist church in Liberty street.

cordingly. At one meeting, no business was transacted but the levying of fines, one member being fined for being late at that meeting.

The sexton was employed on a written contract or, as it is called in one place, "articles of agreement." This functionary seems to have occupied much of the time of the board of trustees. His duties were important, and included, besides the ordinary care of the church building, the keeping of order during church services (a difficult task) and the burial of the dead. The dead were buried in the church yard until, in 1846, a new burying ground was purchased "on the Albany turnpike," a plot of land extending from State street to Albany street. While the church yard remained the only place for burial within the control of the church, the rules sometimes restricted its privileges to members and pew holders of the church and again extended them to others on the payment of a fee. When the new burying ground was acquired, it was laid out in lots, the larger ones "to accommodate thirty two persons," smaller ones "to accommodate sixteen." The larger lots were sold for eight dollars each, and the smaller ones for three dollars. A distinction was still made between members of the church and others, as shown in a resolution passed in December, 1852: "that to all members of the church and persons not members of the church but owning lots in the burial ground, the charge for placing their dead in the dead house be one dollar for each body, and two dollars for all other persons." This plot of ground was used for burials until 1873. Pews were leased under written contracts and payment of the rentals was rigidly enforced. A number of entries show that delinquent pew-holders were dispossessed, and, if members of the church, were summoned before the preacher for disciplinary correction. In a case arising in 1850, it was voted "that the necessary measures be taken to collect the back rent on pew no. 91 and that the former owner be notified that unless payment is made legal measures will be resorted to to compel it." It is gratifying to know that "the former owner" remained a faithful member of the church for many years after that time. No favoritism was shown in exacting pay-

ment of obligations due to the church; trustees and other prominent members were held strictly to the fulfillment of their financial agreements. In 1844, one man was allowed to pay his seat rent, amounting to eight dollars, in work done for the church, and in 1858, a pew was given free of charge to Professor John Newman of Union College in recognition of his services to the church in preaching at various times during the year.

Every source of income was carefully guarded. In 1843, the trustees voted that the treasurer should receive the monthly collections and pay the trustees interest on the same. When, in 1853, permission was given to take up a collection in the public congregation for a charity not connected with the church, the amount of one dollar and fifty cents was reserved, this "being the supposed amount of the ordinary penny collection." In the same year an experiment in church finance was tried by selling the collections to the highest bidder, but the success of the plan does not appear to have been such as to warrant its continuance.

A singular case arose in 1846, when one of the trustees, a man who had been very active and faithful in the work of the church, was expelled from the society. A committee of the trustees was appointed to learn if he could lawfully continue to be a member of the board; the committee reported that they could find no legal objection to his serving out his term of office. The expelled man continued to act as trustee for nearly two years, was appointed a member of important committees, and at one meeting was chosen chairman. At the expiration of his term he was not re-elected, but later he became again a member of the church, and is mentioned by Dr. McKean in 1860 as one of the pillars of the church.

The preacher's salary, made up of "quarterage" and "table expenses" was, in 1839, \$600. In 1841, it was reduced by the voluntary action of the preacher to \$500. In 1844, it was still further reduced to \$450, made up of the disciplinary allowance of \$216, and \$234 for table expenses. The next year the amount was again \$500, which continued to be the salary until 1852, with the exception of the year 1849, when

it was increased by one hundred dollars. The preacher's salary was expected to be paid by sums collected of all members in the class meetings, which thus had an important place in the financial as well as the religious life of the church; the preacher's salary was paid in this way as late as 1872. During these years the class collections were often insufficient, and the trustees were called upon to contribute from the funds under their control. But the trustees, too, found it difficult to meet the general expenses of the church from pew rentals and other sources of income. In May, 1840, a committee from the board of stewards waited upon the trustees and reported that a deficiency of about \$130 remained due upon the minister's salary and requested aid from the trustees. Thereupon it was "on motion Resolved that a collection be taken first from the society after which the Trustees assume & pay the ballence, after much loud and impropper talk between the president & the commity from the stewards adjourned." At a subsequent meeting the accuracy of this record was called in question and it was voted "that so much of the resolution as related to the payment of monies to the preacher in charge be and is hereby confirmed and that the resodue of sed resolution be expunged from the minutes." Perhaps we have here a reminiscence of Andrew Jackson and the famous expunging resolution of Thomas H. Benton; at all events, the resolution was not "expunged," but stands distinct to this day, written in a beautiful blue ink.

The Methodist church has always been the church of the people, and this fact, while bringing great opportunities for Christian work, has attendant disadvantages. The church in Liberty street was much sought after for the holding of meetings of different kinds, some of which would have found a more appropriate place in a building erected for a different purpose, and the trustees had much difficulty in deciding what to admit and what to exclude. At one time a resolution was adopted that none but ministers of the gospel should be allowed to speak in the pulpit; again, it was "Resolved, that the Church shall not be let for any other purpose than the use for which it was originally designed." This resolution was carried by a

vote of five to two, but it proved to be impossible to enforce it. A number of times the city authorities asked for the use of the church for the holding of the Fourth of July celebration; sometimes the request was granted, and again it was refused. The celebration was attended with disorder and injury to the church and its furniture, and another objection seems to be hinted at in the last resolution on the subject, in 1850, when permission was given to the common council to hold the celebration in the church, "on payment of \$30 in advance."

It was often difficult to maintain order in the public services of the church. At the watchnight service in 1838, some mischievous person set preacher and congregation sneezing by placing pepper on the stove. The trustees offered a reward of twenty dollars, and afterward increased it to twenty-five dollars, but without detecting the culprit.

In 1841, an attempt to secure better conditions by separating the sheep from the goats was made by a resolution "that all persons who do not hire or are not provided with Seats or Settings in the Church ar requested to take their Seats in the gallary the males on the west Side & Females on the East." A little later in the same year, the trustees adopted a set of rules for the government of the public congregations which throw light upon the difficulties which in those days beset the men and women who were endeavoring to bring the good tidings of salvation to all sorts and conditions of men.

"Whereas, a number of persons have been in the habit of running in and out of this Church during Public Worship and thereby disturbing the Congregation, We the trustees of said Church do therefore Resolve

That the following shall be its Rules and Regulations

1st. Strangers, attending this Church will be furnished with seats by the Sexton or trustees

2d. It is expected of all persons attending this Church that they will remain untill the services are closed

3d. All persons are absolutely prohibited from remaining in the yard on the piazza or in the stairway during public worship while there are seats unoccupied in the Church

4th. Gentlemen are respectfully and earnestly requested not to use tobacco or spit tobacco juice upon the floor of this church at any rate

5th. All persons enjoying the privileges of this church are expected to contribute one cent at least at each service to aid in defraying the expences

6th. All cutting or marking on the seats is strictly forbidden
Resolved

That wee will use all lawfull means to carry the above Rules and Regulations into effect and also to prevent all laughing whispering or any other conduct obviously wrong or unbecoming in the house of God"

If the good order of public worship was disturbed by wilful acts of the ungodly, it occurred also that decorum was violated by excessive enthusiasm on the part of the more demonstrative of the saints, and occasionally measures were taken to prevent one and another of the brethren and sisters from speaking and praying in meeting. These good souls doubtless deserved admonition and even repression, yet it may be that there are sometimes worse things in the life of a church than excess of zeal.

During these years of difficulty, the church was true to its traditions in its sympathy with moral reforms and work for the advancement of humanity beyond its own borders. In 1843, it showed its sympathy with the temperance movement of that day by taking up a collection for the Washingtonian Society. The use of the church was also granted to local temperance societies for their meetings. In the same year a special collection was taken for the Oregon mission. In 1840, a collection was taken "to aid the African school at Rochester;" apparently this was the negro Sunday school which had existed for some years in that city. But the Schenectady church was not yet an abolition church; like the city in which it was located, and, indeed, like the church at large, it was distinctly conservative on the great question of the day. In 1844, the quarterly conference petitioned the General Conference to re-elect Dr. Bond as editor of the "Christian Advocate and Journal;" doubtless because, in that year which was

to see the church divided on the slavery question, Dr. Bond was one of the foremost of those who opposed the agitation for abolition, and yet refused to countenance recent attempts to extend the power of slavery. In that year of political and ecclesiastical excitement, Dr. Witherspoon, a pronounced abolitionist, was pastor of the church. His position was so antagonistic to that of his people that he found it necessary to leave at the end of the first year of his pastorate. In 1853 a collection was taken for the benefit of the "African church" in Schenectady.

Great interest was taken in the Sunday school and much attention was given to the proper religious instruction of the children. In 1845 it was reported to the quarterly conference that the school consisted of 4 officers, 27 teachers, and 244 scholars of whom 70 were in the infant department. The library contained 400 volumes. The school was prosperous; but "it is rather in a great degree the prosperity of disorder, the luxuriance of a productive soil without the care and attention of the husbandman. The jewels lie scattered about but only need the effect of order and arrangement to develop their rarer beauties. The temple is beautiful in its ruin and only wants the magic touch to rise in graceful proportions." This means simply that there was an imperfect organization and the records had not been properly kept. A glimpse of a more pathetic side of church life is afforded by a report of the superintendent in October, 1844, "that the school was in its usual good condition except a small falling off in the male department owing to the season requiring warm clothing." The Sunday school varied considerably from year to year but there was no notable change in it until after 1860.

From about the year 1850 a new period of progress began. The first impression of the new advance comes to the present-day student of our history in a very pleasant way; in 1848 Giles S. Barhydt was elected trustee and was at once chosen secretary of the board. The minutes now show marked improvement.

At the end of 1849 the front of the church was remodeled. The loggia or open "piazza" was enclosed and instead of the

high stoop almost as wide as the church, a narrower flight of steps led to a central door, and two side doors opened directly into the basement. Inside stairs made possible another means of access to the church above. This was done to facilitate the heating of the church, to provide a better and easier means of access to the main body of the building, and also, in part, to remove an occasion for disturbance by unruly persons, which had caused much annoyance after, as well as before, the "rules and regulations" of 1841.

The parsonage on Union street was sold by auction in February, 1850, for eleven hundred dollars and this money was used to pay one-third of the debt still owing to the Schenectady Savings Bank. The price was "highly satisfactory" to the board of trustees.

In November, 1850, a bell was ordered for the church and two months later it was reported that it had been procured, at a total expense of nearly two hundred dollars. This is the same bell which now hangs in the tower of the State street church. In the fall of 1852, gas was introduced into the church after the innovation had been approved by a meeting of the members of the church. A little more than two years later, heaters took the place of the old wood stoves which had tried, unsuccessfully, to make the church comfortable. The meeting at which this improvement was ordered was held on the evening of Christmas Day, 1854, and every trustee was present. In June, 1861, a committee was appointed to remove the dead from the church yard.

Gradually the financial conditions of the church improved. In 1855 a plan of weekly contributions to a sinking fund for the payment of the debt was adopted, and two years later the church was reported to be out of debt. The pastor's salary was increased in 1857 to \$800, in 1864, to \$1000, in 1866 to \$1200, in 1869, to \$1500. The benevolent collections also increased though there was some decrease during the years of the civil war. Great attention was given to the collections for the Bible Society and the Tract Society, and to the distribution of tracts in the city. The only reference to the war to be found in the records is a resolution of the quarterly con-

ference that ninety-five per cent of the allowance for tracts "be expended in furnishing the soldiers of the 18th Regiment from this city, with tracts."

In 1852, the membership of the church consisted of 207 in full connection and 103 probationers; the next year the number of full members was reported as 310. It did not again rise above 300 until 1859. Following the panic of 1857, a great revival swept over the country, in which the Schenectady church shared; in 1858, 129 probationers were reported, and the number in full membership increased from 252 in 1857 to 336 in 1859. The church was lifted to a higher level from which it never again receded. It maintained its numbers and increased its standing and influence in the community. From 1859 to 1871 the number of members continued to be between 300 and 400, with the exception of one year; in 1864 there were 290 members and 55 probationers.

There were always local preachers and exhorters in the church, and applications for license to preach were numerous. Several of the local preachers were Englishmen who had held the same office at home. In 1850 a case arose which shows that the brethren were earnest about matters of doctrine and sometimes differed in their convictions. The preacher in charge informed the quarterly conference that at a recent service when infant baptism was being administered, one of the local preachers left the church and, being subsequently questioned, stated that he did not believe in the baptism of infants and would refuse to be present on such occasions. A committee of five was appointed "to wait upon Brother P. with reference to the matter," and reported at the next meeting "that Brother P. confesses his error in turning his back on the ordinance of infant baptism and says he will not afflict the brethren any more by refusing to witness the ordinance." At the end of the year it was thought best not to renew the erring brother's license to preach, but four years later he applied again and the license was granted.

During these years the quarterly conference gave its attention to some important matters of church administration and government. In 1852 appears the first reference to a parti-

pation by the local church in the choice of a pastor: "In reference to the suggestion that this conference take some action touching the matter of our next minister it was Resolved that we submit to the usage of our church, leaving the responsibility where the Discipline has placed it." The first record of the naming of a committee on the appointment of a new pastor occurs in 1860.

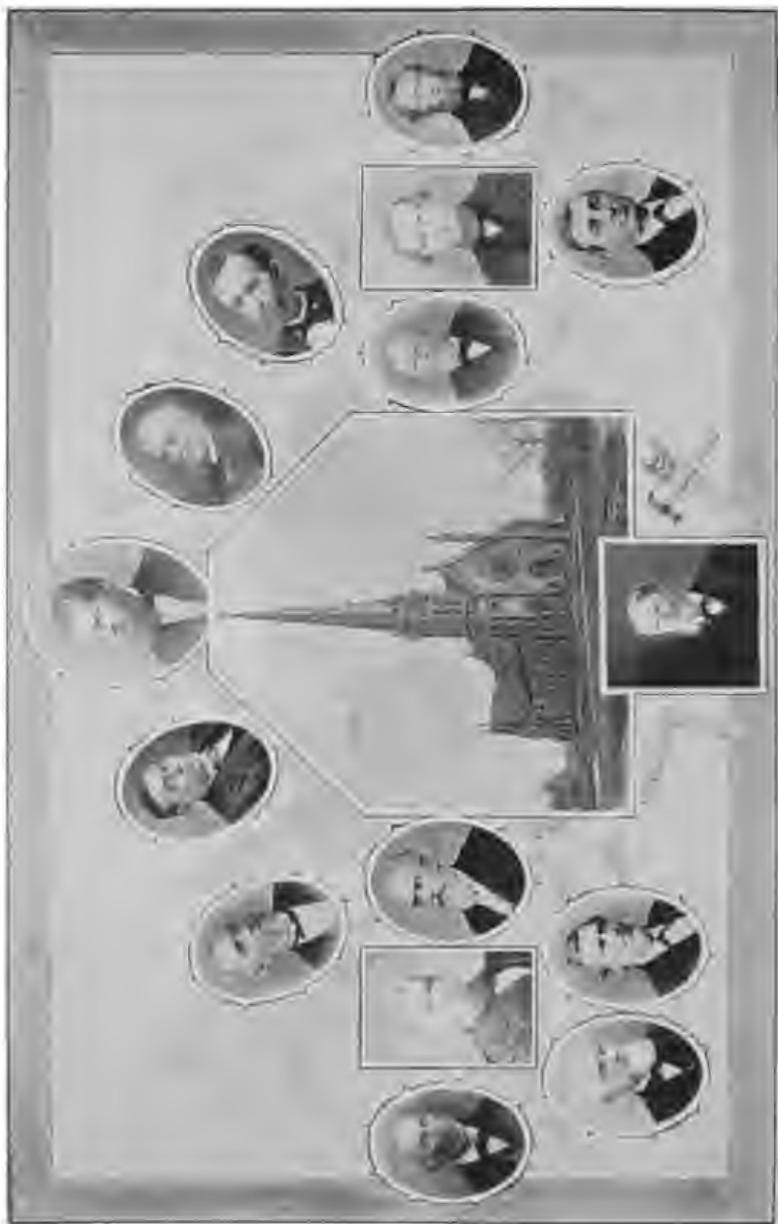
In 1859, the quarterly conference voted, 16 to 4, against the proposal to extend the time limit of pastoral appointment from two years to three. At the same meeting it voted, 17 to 3, in favor of a change in the law of the Church so as to permit of the election of lay delegates to the general conference. It also voted, 16 to 4, to recommend to the general conference "some essential modification of the office of presiding elder in the Methodist Episcopal church."

The Sunday school prospered and increased in numbers, under the very efficient superintendency of Daniel A. Atwell. Especial care was taken to maintain the library as a means of religious education. The school grew in numbers and developed its work until the accommodations offered by the existing church building became altogether inadequate. The first recorded complaints of the old church have reference to the needs of the Sunday school. The building became too small for the needs of the congregation, the arrangement of rooms, which had seemed good enough when the church was built, had become antiquated with respect to the needs and desires of a progressive generation; the church was poorly heated, and the means of exit so poor that the consequences of a possible alarm of fire were greatly dreaded. In his report to the quarterly conference in February, 1868, the pastor speaks of "the exceeding discomfort of the house," and in November of the same year he says: "The warming and ventilation of the house ought to engage the careful and constant attention of the board of trustees. Let us have pure air and warm air, and much prayer and fervent prayer, and the Lord will do us good!" Since 1865 the question of a new church had been foremost in the minds of the people, and how the great enterprise was carried out will be told in the next chapter.

In the meantime, the church continued vigorously at work. The weekly class meetings were still the active centre of church life. On the first Sunday of each month the members paid to the leaders the amounts which they had pledged toward the payment of the pastor's salary; at the monthly meeting of the official board the leaders reported the attendance of members and the spiritual condition of their classes, and also paid to the recording steward the monies collected. These amounts were paid over at once to the pastor, and for several years his receipt appears upon the minutes of each meeting. At many meetings no business is recorded except the receipt and payment of money, and at the end of the conference year meetings were held every week, if necessary, until the pastor's claim was met. The old occasion of difference with the board of trustees was avoided by the appropriation, on the part of the trustees, of a definite sum, each year, to be applied on the payment of the pastor's salary. In 1863, the amount appropriated was four hundred dollars, in 1866, five hundred dollars. In the spring of 1872, the new "envelope system" of paying the pastor's salary by weekly offerings collected in the public congregation, was adopted. In the inauguration of the system, it was thought best to connect the new with the old by having the class leaders secure the pledges from the members of the church. A special committee was appointed to obtain gifts from others.

The revival spirit was strong in the church, and its numbers increased. In 1871, there were 124 probationers, and in September of that year 66 were received into the church at one time, many of them being adults. The number of members in full connection now rose above 400.

The last service in the old church in Liberty street was held on the fifteenth day of December, 1872. It was a solemn and affecting service, marked by mingled joy and sorrow; the sacred associations of nearly forty years knit the hearts of the people to the old home they were leaving, but they looked forward with hope and faith to a greater and better life in the new one.



Church in State Street, 1874, with Trustees from 1865 to 1874

Top Row, left to right: Giles S. Bartholit, William Greenhalgh, Joseph B. Graham, Levi Case, David A. Atwell.
Middle Row: Peter Christier, J. Russell Freeman, Lewis C. Bartlett, Stephen D. Gates, William H. Clute, Aaron Vedder.
Bottom Row: Ira Brownell, Peter Van Dyck, Lewis Brewer.

Bottom, under church: Thomas Davis, head carpenter.

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT BUILDING ENTERPRISE

By the beginning of the year 1865 it had become evident that the church building in Liberty street was no longer adequate for the needs of the society and that some change must be made if the church was to continue its progress. For several years there was much difference of opinion among the members, some thinking that a new church should be erected on a new site, and others desiring to rebuild the existing edifice.

The first formal action was taken by the quarterly conference on the sixth of March, 1865, when a resolution was passed, by a vote of twelve to two, recommending the trustees to sell the church building. Soon after this a "Church Building Fund Association" was organized for the purpose "of securing at some day not very distant improved church accommodations." The trustees gave their approval to the new organization, and declared in favor of a new church. During the next year the Association raised \$2400 in cash, and in the year following, "in cash and good subscriptions," nearly five thousand dollars. At different times during the fall of 1866 the Building Fund Association bought several parcels of land forming the lot at the corner of Union and Lafayette streets, where the German Methodist Episcopal Church now stands, and the title was vested in the trustees of the church. On the twenty-seventh of August, 1867, the trustees passed the following resolution:

"Whereas; it is deemed for the interest of the church that some expression on the subject of its future be put forth on the part of this board

Therefore, be it

Resolved, That we are in favor of the erection of a new church edifice, considering it as essential to the prosperity and permanence of Methodism in this city; and we hereby pledge our best efforts to secure this object and thus

advance the glory of God and the best interests of this church and people."

This resolution well expresses the spirit in which the great work was accomplished and which has guided the church in the great advance which the new church made possible.

The trustees had shown from the first a correct appreciation of the needs of the church, but the church was divided and there was much wavering in opinion. In December, 1867, the quarterly conference by a small majority voted down a resolution in favor of choosing another location and adopted another resolution looking toward the remodeling of the old building. To increase the confusion, the trustees, in February, 1868, purchased a plot of land which included the present site of the church on the corner of State and Lafayette streets. The church now possessed two sites for a new church, the trustees had, in 1866, voted to sell the old church, and the quarterly conference had voted to remain in the old building. There was great danger of a permanent division of the church. A meeting of the whole church was called and after much debate it was decided that a committee should be appointed to secure pledges for the building of a new church; that a new church should be built if subscriptions to the amount of \$30,000 were obtained; that each subscriber should express his preference as to the site and that the site receiving the largest amount in pledges should be chosen. The amount secured in pledges was \$30,321, and the State street site was voted for by the subscribers to the greater part of this amount. The Union street site was sold in 1870.

The property on State street was bought in several parcels, the portion on Lafayette street being purchased last. Lafayette street was then even narrower than at present, and the trustees sold to the city, for the widening of the street, a strip of about the width of the present sidewalk. The location proved to be the most commanding in the whole city. It was, however, criticised at that time by many people on the ground that it was too far uptown. It was, indeed, almost on the edge of the city; no one could

foresee that in thirty years it would become a down-town church, in the midst of the rush and confusion of the business section, and that this would become the only objection to the location.

The choice was largely due to the wisdom of Peter Van Dyck, then president of the board of trustees, and the development of the possibilities of the site and the actual accomplishment of the plans were the work, above all others, of the Hon. Joseph B. Graham. To Giles S. Barhydt, treasurer of the board, honor is due for his part in the great undertaking. Many others served according to their means and ability, and no man can presume to apportion the merit due to each, but the constant voice of those who shared in the labor has been, that among many who were worthy, the first place belongs to Joseph B. Graham. Mr. Graham was appointed by the trustees superintendent of the construction of the building, and the excellence of its construction is largely due to his oversight.

Work on the foundation was begun in the fall of 1870; the superstructure was begun in the spring of the following year, the cornerstone being laid June 21, 1871, by the Rev. Samuel Meredith, Presiding Elder of the Albany District. By Christmas of that year the exterior of the entire building, except the windows and doors, was completed. Again the work ceased during the winter, and in the spring of 1872 the completion of the transept, or chapel, fronting on Lafayette street, was begun. In December this part of the building was ready for occupancy, and the first service was held on Sunday, December 22, when the presiding elder, Rev. C. F. Burdick, preached the sermon and a large congregation was present in spite of bitter cold weather.

On the same day at half-past one in the afternoon, the usual time for the session of the Sunday school, dedicatory services were held by the school, and three days later the Christmas festival was celebrated with great rejoicing.

The church in Liberty street was now abandoned, and in February, 1873, it was sold to St. John's Roman Catholic

church for \$10,000. The bell had already been removed to the new church and hung in the tower where it still summons the people to worship. For over a year the congregation worshiped in the Sunday school room, upstairs, until the auditorium was completed. The church was dedicated to the service of God on Thursday, March 12, 1874. Several former pastors were present, the morning sermon was preached by the Rev. Ira G. Bidwell, of Syracuse, and the evening sermon by the Rev. Dr. Benoni I. Ives. Dr. Bidwell was one of the great preachers of Methodism in that day, and had been a classmate of Mr. Graham in Union College, in the class of 1858.

Both in the morning and the evening, subscriptions were taken, under the leadership of Dr. Ives, to secure the amount still needed to pay for the church, and at the conclusion of the evening service the church was formally dedicated by the presiding elder, C. F. Burdick. A month later the Troy Conference met for its annual session in the new church.

For the piece of land originally bought, fronting on State, Lafayette and Chapel streets, the sum of \$10,000 was paid; later, a part was sold for \$5,900, making the net cost of the present lot, only \$4,100. A comparison with the present value of this magnificent property gives a good idea of the wonderful change that has occurred in the city of Schenectady since the early seventies. The church received, in payment of one of the subscriptions to the building fund, two lots on the opposite side of Crescent Park, where volunteer regiments lived in barracks as they were being recruited for service in the Civil War. These lots were sold, in 1880, for \$4000.

The total cost of land, church, furniture and fixtures was \$85,000, of which \$55,000 had been paid before the dedication. On the day of dedication, subscriptions were taken to cover the balance of \$30,000 which was needed. Men who had already given liberally subscribed all they could afford, and then subscribed again; they gave for themselves, for their wives, and for their children. One man subscribed for himself, and for his wife, then for his little son, and finally "for

a prospective grandson;" the grandson was born in 1906. The pledges made amounted to more than \$34,000 which was increased, later, to \$36,000, and there was great rejoicing at the completion of a mighty work. More than five years had been spent in active planning; the work itself had taken nearly four years more, and now at last the new church was a reality.

No adequate story of the sacrifices made by the men who built this church ever has been told or ever can be told. We know that in a church of about four hundred members, none of them rich, even by the standards of that day, three men gave five thousand dollars or more, each. We are told that at different times during the progress of the work two men gave their personal notes for more than the joint fortunes of both. We hear of men who mortgaged the houses they lived in for money to give to the church, and died years afterward, never having been able to free their homes from the encumbrance. Two days before the dedication an official meeting was held at which there was much anxious consultation, and a large sum was subscribed by the members present. The record says that the meeting adjourned at a late hour; we are told that the hour was half-past one in the morning. Perhaps we understand something of the spirit in which these men did their work when we read that at a meeting of the quarterly conference held shortly before the beginning of the enterprise there was no quorum, and the ten men who were present remained to pray; but we cannot feel the burden as they felt it. Surely it was with a great price that these men purchased the privileges which we enjoy.

The new church was at last a reality, but the anxiety was not over. Six months before the dedication, the panic of 1873 came suddenly upon the country. The panic was soon over, but following it came hard times, growing worse year by year, and continuing for more than five years, until the spring of 1879. Schenectady was then a small town of 13,000 people; it had but one great industry, the Schenectady Locomotive Works, commonly referred to as "the big shop;" this

employed, at most, 1500 men. The Locomotive Works ran with a reduced force, then on part time, and for months at a time were closed altogether. Everywhere there was business prostration, and nowhere, perhaps, worse than in Schenectady. The church, of course, suffered severely. Men who had subscribed to the building fund were unable to pay; the surplus of \$6000, which had been considered more than enough to cover all deficiencies, proved to be inadequate, and the church found itself burdened, in 1878, with a debt of about nine thousand dollars. It was difficult, also, to raise money for the current expenses of the church, and a floating debt accumulated, which increased year by year until, in 1880, it amounted to fourteen hundred dollars. The annual receipts for current expenses during the five years following the dedication of the church, amounted to only three thousand dollars. This seems to us a very small sum, but it appears to have been more than was ever paid in the old church. It is difficult to determine how much was raised for church expenses before 1872, because of the methods of collecting and reporting; but in the year 1867-68, the total amount was a little less than \$2400. For purposes of comparison, the official board in 1875 obtained from other churches of the city a statement of their current expenses. It appeared that the annual expenses of the First Presbyterian Church were \$5557, of the First Reformed Church \$4196, of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church \$3300, and of the Second Reformed Church \$2500. It was estimated that our church needed \$62 a week, or \$3224 a year, to pay all regular expenses; the average receipts were \$52 a week from envelopes, and \$5 from basket collections, leaving a deficiency of \$5 a week. At a meeting held when the great difficulty of the situation was just beginning to appear, "the financial matters of the church were discussed and hopeful views entertained of our success." Many hopes were disappointed, but courage did not fail. Economies were practised wherever possible; at one time it was proposed to reduce the pastor's salary to \$1200 and it was actually fixed at \$1300, but at the end of the year it was restored to the former figure.

of \$1500, though it was impossible to pay the \$200 until several months later. On one occasion it was reported to the official board that there was a pressing need of funds and a collection was then and there taken up; the sum obtained amounted to \$17.38.

The benevolent collections also suffered; the contribution to the missionary societies of the church, which in 1860 had been \$237 and in 1870 \$503, declined after 1871 until in 1879 it was only \$218.

But if these were years of difficulty they were by no means years of stagnation, nor yet of discouragement. The church kept its faith and was stronger than it ever had been. The membership, with some natural fluctuations, increased; when the new church was first occupied, in 1872, there were 415 full members, and in 1880, at the end of the period of greatest difficulty, the number was 456. The congregations were large and, on special occasions and often at the regular services on Sunday evenings, the church was crowded. In 1878, the trustees found it necessary to pass a resolution that for the future the ushers should be required to conform to the provisions of the law forbidding the placing of chairs in the aisles of the church. Prayer-meetings were well attended, and revivals were frequent; in 1871 there were 124 probationers; in 1874, 59; in 1876, 104; in 1877, 74. In 1876, the sexton presented a bill for extra services during ten weeks of "our late protracted meeting." This is the longest series of continuous meetings of which record is found, and justifies the use of the term "protracted." Just thirty years before, similar meetings had been continued for fifty-two days; methods of revival work had not changed so much during the intervening time as during the same period since 1876. The meetings were conducted by the pastor, with occasional assistance by other preachers of the conference, and the members of the church, especially the class leaders, took an active part in the work. The class leaders continued to assist in the financial management of the church by securing contributions to the pastor's salary and visiting those who were delinquent in payment.

As in earlier years, the church kept strict oversight of its members. Probationers were not received into full membership until they were recommended by their class leaders and approved by the official board or the leaders and stewards meeting. When admitted, they received care when in need, and were subjected to rigid discipline when they transgressed the laws of the church, or proved unfaithful to the obligations of Christian morality. Month by month, at the meetings of the official board, the pastor asked the questions prescribed by the Discipline of the church, "Are there any sick, are there any in need of temporal relief, are there any that walk disorderly and will not be reproved?" Each case was carefully considered, the needy received assistance, those who persisted in leading improper lives or in absenting themselves from the services of the church, were required to withdraw. One among many entries begins, "The pastor presented a list of members who had ceased to attend church with us, and contribute nothing to its support, and asked that some action should be taken with reference to them." Action was taken; some were asked to withdraw, and others were given time to escape the same penalty by amending their ways. The record of the same meeting continues, "As it was well known that A. B. spent the money, or part of it, received from the poor fund, in purchasing beer or stimulating drinks, on motion the treasurer of that fund was directed not to pay her any more money from that fund." Intoxication was a charge made against a number of persons, and occasionally there is a hint of darker sins. There was no respect of persons; rich and poor were treated alike. "C. D. was also reported as being publicly intoxicated on election day," and his class leader was directed to visit him. C. D. was a prominent member and had given liberally to the building of the new church, but this did not cause his fault to be overlooked. It is a sad thing to find that so many church members fell into evil ways, yet even these dismal records show that the church was ministering to those who greatly needed the living power of the gospel to save their lives from ruin; and if there was failure in some cases,

there was glorious success in many more. The care taken in the admission of members and the watchfulness over them after they had been received into the church, show that membership in the church was considered a precious privilege; and it can scarcely be doubted that his connection with the church was esteemed by the average member as a more important part of his life than it is today.

The Sunday school prospered and grew, under the inspiring leadership of one of the great men of our church, Professor William Wells, who was superintendent for twenty-five years. As the school increased in numbers, the primary department was crowded out of the place designed for it, upstairs, and filled the prayer room, below. It was found, too, that the extra space gained was not enough for the needs of the main school.

The general progress in the character of the church, which had begun in the old days in Liberty street, continued, and the State street church held its position as one of the leading churches of the conference. In 1875, the subscribers to the "Christian Advocate" numbered sixty-eight, about the same as in the present year. The church was represented in the first general conference to which laymen were admitted as delegates, that of 1872, when Professor Wells was elected as one of the two lay delegates from the Troy Conference. Professor Wells was a delegate also to the general conference of 1876, and Joseph B. Graham to that of 1884.

In 1880, William H. Hughes began his first pastorate in Schenectady. There had been a revival of business, and the time was propitious for a forward movement in the church. A new plan of church finance was adopted, and the annual receipts rose at once to \$4000. The current expenses were met, and the floating indebtedness reduced in one year to four hundred dollars; by another year it had practically disappeared. The debt due to building was reduced to \$8000, and funded in bonds paying five per cent interest. At the beginning of the conference year 1882-83, the total net indebtedness of the church amounted to less than five thousand

dollars. The missionary collections began to rise and reached, in 1883, \$782, and in 1887, \$1226. In 1883 there was a great revival and at the conference of that year there were reported 500 members and 150 probationers. In the fall of that year, when the term of probation was expiring, the list of probationers was carefully examined by the official board, extra meetings being held for that purpose, and in October ninety-six were received into the church at one time. Forty-three were continued on probation, and eleven were reported as having removed.

The classes, with the exception of one for old people which met on Sunday noon after church, met on Sunday evening an hour before the preaching service. For a number of years after this time, two hundred or more of the members of the church were present at these meetings. Every member of the church was assigned to a class, and as the number of class-rooms was not equal to the number of classes, they met in groups of two or three. The classes were numbered and each group was known by a letter which indicated it. In the years following 1880, many families moved into the city and connected themselves with our church. This fact, with some other things, caused the official board to pass, in 1883, the following resolution: "In view of the large number who have united with us on probation as the result of our recent revival work, and in view of the fact that during the past few years a goodly number have come to us by letter, some of whom are possessed of gifts and graces fitting them for larger usefulness in the church, and in view of the fact that the spiritual well-being of those recently converted and the future prosperity of the church depend in no small degree upon a wise reorganization of the classes at the present time: Therefore, resolved, that it is the judgment of this official board that the present corps of leaders should surrender their class books, in order to relieve the pastor of as much embarrassment as possible in the performance of the delicate, responsible and arduous task of rearranging the respective classes." At the same time, the pastor was author-

ized to increase the number of classes to sixteen. This proposal was not carried without opposition, and the reorganization caused some dissatisfaction and criticism. It appeared then, as once again in the history of the church, that the class-meeting, with the inestimable good which it did in maintaining a vigorous spiritual life in the church, yet sometimes was subject to the disadvantage that loyalty to the smaller group tended to disturb the harmony of the church as a whole.

In 1884, the church began to consider the possibility of paying the remainder of the debt, but a business depression which continued through the next year, prevented the accomplishment of this purpose. The Ladies Aid Society had, some years before, begun the accumulation of funds with the purpose of building a parsonage. These funds finally amounted to \$2000, which the society had invested in the bonds of the church. In 1887, the ladies offered to surrender these bonds to the trustees of the church if the trustees would raise the full amount necessary to pay the debt on the church, and also to put in new heaters and make other necessary repairs to the church and Sunday school room. The offer was accepted and after some months of effort the money required was raised. March 11 & 12, 1888, the church celebrated the eightieth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the first Methodist Episcopal church in Schenectady and the fourteenth anniversary of the dedication of the church in State street. The great "blizzard" prevented the meeting on the evening of the second day, but the church had been improved and made more comfortable, the mortgage which secured the bonds was burned, and a great period of our church history was brought to a happy conclusion.

CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF EXPANSION

As soon as the church was out of debt, a movement was begun for the extension of Methodism into the rapidly growing southeastern section of the city. Work outside of the home church was not a new thing; for a number of years, beginning while the church was still in Liberty street, a Sunday school had been conducted in the school house on the Van Antwerp road, in Niskayuna, about half a mile from the present Union Street church, and in 1888 a number of our members were interested in an unofficial mission work conducted in what was then the upper fourth ward, in East Liberty street.¹

The first definite step in the establishment of the present Albany street church was taken at the meeting of the official board held Monday evening, June 4, 1888, when J. B. Graham spoke of the needs of the city due to its rapid growth, urged the duty and responsibility of the church now that it was free to make a new advance, and expressed the opinion that the upper fifth ward was the best site for a new church. Some of those present thought it would be better to extend and strengthen the existing mission in the fourth ward, and a committee was appointed to look the ground over. This committee reported to the quarterly conference on the ninth of July, recommending the present site of the church, then in the fifth ward. After a long discussion, this recommendation was adopted without a dissenting vote. A little later the trustees appointed a committee to examine sites offered for sale, and authorized their president and treasurer to purchase "such property as in their judgment is for the best interests of the church for mission purposes." The trustees preferred a lot on State street, but the quarterly conference, after some wavering, adhered to its determination, and in the spring of 1889 the property on Albany street was purchased for \$2800, mortgages being given for the whole amount.

¹ Now Eastern avenue.

Steps were at once taken toward the erection of a building, but without waiting for even the beginning of building, services were held on Sunday afternoons, the first being held on the seventh of July, 1889, in the open air.

During the fall and winter of 1889-90, a modest church building was erected. The dedicatory sermon was preached in the State street church by the presiding elder, Dr. Joel W Eaton. Another former pastor, Dr. Hughes, took charge of the raising of the money needed to pay for the new building; \$1250 had already been paid in private contributions, and \$1600, more than the sum required, was subscribed on this day.

It had been decided by the fourth quarterly conference "that the chapel be conducted as a mission of the church for the year," and the Rev. E. A. Braman was appointed to Schenectady to take charge of the new mission. The work was so successful from the beginning that a separate organization seemed necessary, and in June the official board requested the presiding elder to appoint Mr. Braman preacher in charge. This was done, and on the fifteenth of June, 1890, the new organization was effected and the first communion celebrated.

The separation of the two churches was not yet complete. Until 1892 the title to the Albany street property was vested in the trustees of the State street church, and at first there was but one treasurer. In the first year of the new church's existence it received financial aid from the mother church to the amount of about fifteen hundred dollars, and in the second year, two hundred and fifty dollars. Thereafter it was self-supporting, though individual members of the old church contributed to the building of the present structure, in 1901. In 1892, the quarterly conference directed the trustees to convey the property to the trustees of the Albany street church, and the transfer was made accordingly. At this time, a lot on Steuben street, twenty-seven feet wide, was reserved, but in 1901, when the Albany street church desired to erect the present building on the corner and extending back on Steuben street, the trustees of the State street church gave to it this

piece of land also. The official board of the Albany street church conveyed their acknowledgment and thanks in a series of resolutions which well express the feeling which ought to exist between two churches so closely connected.

"Whereas: Our Mother Church, the State Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Schenectady, N. Y., has shown her loving interest in our present struggle to build a church suitable to house our people and which will be an honor to Methodism in this city, by generously giving us their lot at the rear of our new church—therefore, be it resolved:

1st. That we, the Official Board, take this, the first opportunity, heartily and unanimously to thank the State Street Methodists for their generous gift.

2d. That while sincerely expressing our gratitude for this munificent gift which adds so much to the value of our church property, we at the same time pray for and rejoice in the prosperity of the Church which gave us birth.

3d. That these resolutions be spread upon the pages of our official record and a copy of the same be forwarded to the State Street Methodist Church.

March 21, 1901 "

It had been the intention from the first to have a parsonage to complete the church property on State street, and when, in September 1874, a part of the original plot was sold, the trustees formally resolved to appropriate the proceeds of the sale for the building of a parsonage, and the building committee was instructed to procure plans. The project was, however, abandoned because of the financial difficulties which came unexpectedly upon the church. Just nine years later, the Ladies Aid Society addressed a communication to the trustees which begins as follows: "Three years ago the Ladies of the Aid Society of the M. E. Church proposed to build a parsonage. Some members of your board desired us to delay operations until we had sufficient money to meet some of the first payments. Relying on your experience and judgment we willingly complied. Now we have \$1140 in our treasury

and desire your permission and co-operation in the work of building the parsonage." The communication continues: "We are told that while we have a parsonage lot it is poor economy to pay rent for another. We think it will cost the church less money to pay the interest of a small parsonage debt until the Ladies can meet it, than to continue to rent a parsonage." Experience was to show that this thought was the offspring of a cheerful spirit rather than of forethought and calculation, and the suggestion that building operations might be begun without money to meet any of the first payments certainly seems a little naïve. Yet it would be wrong to imagine that these are the peculiar weaknesses of inexperienced women; for when the parsonage was actually built, the wise men who planned the work began without a cent in the treasury, and calculated that they were saving money by the operation. Nor did they show the readiness of the ladies to correct discovered errors.

The trustees, in 1883, took the matter into consideration, but nothing was done. The fund of the Ladies Aid Society, grown to \$2000, formed the nucleus of the fund for paying the debt in 1888, as has already been related.

On the first day of June, 1891, the quarterly conference instructed the trustees to build a parsonage on the church lot, and to borrow the money for the purpose. The trustees proposed to raise part of the money necessary by selling a portion of the church lot on Chapel street, thirty-two feet in width, for twelve hundred dollars. Fortunately, this project was not carried out. The building was begun in the fall of 1891, and in the following spring the pastor moved from the house No. 610 Chapel street, which had been rented by the church for some years, into the new parsonage. The parsonage cost \$6900, and the trustees borrowed \$6000 on mortgage to pay for it; a little later more was borrowed to cover the whole cost.

In 1894, extensive repairs were made to the church; a new slate roof was constructed, the walls of the auditorium were frescoed, and other improvements made. For several

months the church services were held in the Sunday school room, upstairs. This was in the midst of the hard times following the panic of 1893, and when the repairs were complete, it was thought best not to ask the people to pay the whole amount expended, but when the collection was taken the readiness of the people to give was such that much more was given than asked for, and it was seen that a mistake had been made in underestimating the willingness of the church to make needed improvements.

The debt began with the parsonage, and was increased by the repairs; then it was found convenient to provide for an occasional deficit in current expenses, occasioned by the hard times, by adding something to a debt already existing; finally, considerable additions were made by street assessments, caused by the paving, within a few years, of the three streets bounding the church property. The debt, beginning in 1892 at \$6000, after 1895 remained for some years at about \$10,000. Beginning with the year 1900, various efforts have been made to extinguish the debt and it has been gradually reduced until, in 1907, it amounts to \$3643. This trifling sum is not enough to cause any inconvenience to the church, and serves to prove that even in an exceptionally strong church the efficiency of the whole is not equal to the sum of the efficiency of all of its parts.

The period since 1888 has been one of decided increase in membership. From 1889 to 1898 the number of members was between seven hundred and eight hundred; in 1899 it was over eight hundred, in the next year very nearly one thousand,² and since 1903 it has become much more than one thousand.

During this later period more dependence was placed upon the assistance of evangelists during revival meetings. In April, 1888, Dr. George F Pentecost conducted a series of union meetings in the Centre street opera house, and of those converted in these meetings ninety-two became probationers in the State street church. In the fall of 1898, revival meetings

² There is a mistake of one hundred in the membership as given in the Conference Minutes of 1900. The minutes give 865; the correct number is 965, one hundred more.



A Page of Parsonages

1. North Center St. (present site of Stock's Bottling works), used as parsonage until 1834; building torn down, 1907. 2. 420 Union St., 1834-1850. 3. No. 15, Cor. Yates St. and Bradley Alley, 1850-1856. 4. 435 Liberty St., 1856-1864. 5. No. 437 Cor. Jay and Liberty Sts., 1864-1872. 6. No. 631 Cor. Chapel and Johnson Sts., 1872-1881. 7. 610 Chapel St., 1881-1892. 8. 607 State St., 1892—

were held in the church under the leadership of the Rev. Charles H. Yatman, best known as the leader of the young people's meetings at Ocean Grove, and one hundred and fifty-seven persons united with the church on probation. The pastors of the church, Dr. Graham and his assistant, Mr. Statham, gave great attention to the care of the converts, and some change in the method of admission to full membership is indicated by a resolution of the official board: "Probationers, as per list in the pastor's possession, were recommended to full membership, subject to the pastor's approval." Some interesting facts regarding probationers are given in the pastor's report to the fourth quarterly conference in February, 1900. He states that he had received, during his pastorate of four years, fifty persons on probation in connection with the usual services of the church; of these forty-five, or ninety per cent, became members in full standing. One hundred and fifty-seven were received on probation as the result of Mr. Yatman's meetings; about eighty per cent were admitted to membership. Fifty probationers came to the church from union meetings held by Dr. Chapman; only about fifty per cent of them continued to full membership. Obviously, the regular work of the church produces the most permanent results. Dr. Graham explains the difference in the other cases by saying that the converts from the Yatman meetings were largely young people from our own Sunday school, while many of those from the Chapman meetings were persons who had not been under the influence of the church.

The class-meetings continued in full vigor until the beginning of the new century. Twenty-one classes met in seven groups, and the average attendance was reported, in 1889, as two hundred and forty-five.

The Oxford League, established by Dr. Hughes in his second pastorate, became the Epworth League in 1900. The League continued the young people's prayer-meeting which had been held for many years on Friday evening, and it has been an active and vigorous factor in the spiritual and social life of the church. In the last decade of the nineteenth century

there were again a number of local preachers in the church, mostly students in Union College. Some of them have become members of this and other conferences, and one, W T Cherry, is a missionary in Malaysia.

The period since 1900 has been one of more marked and continuous advance than any other in the history of the church. The membership increased to more than one thousand, and at the conference held just before the centennial celebration it was reported as 50 probationers and 1365 members in full standing. In 1900 a deaconess, Miss Alice M. Barker, was engaged to assist in pastoral work, and gave valuable service for three years. In the years since 1903 it has been thought best to have an assistant pastor to meet the increasing demands upon the minister of the church.

The efficiency of the church has been increased by better organization. The Ladies Aid Society has been divided into neighborhood groups, much to the advantage of the work of the society. While Francis T Brown was pastor, he organized the "Captain Thomas Webb Club" among the men of the church. Dr. Adams originated the "social hour" which the club holds on Sunday evenings after the church service. Strangers are especially invited to be present on these occasions, and men from almost every state in the union and from many foreign countries have responded to the invitation. In this way many have become interested in the church and have joined its membership. Accessions have been constantly made in connection with the regular services of the church, the invitation being always given, morning and evening, to any who might wish to join the church by letter or on probation. Nor has the church ceased to be a revival church. A most remarkable revival began with the week of prayer in 1905. Afternoon services were held in the Emmanuel Baptist church and the Rev. George R. Lunn of the First Reformed church preached every day. As the week advanced the congregations, small at first, became large, and it was apparent that the people were profoundly moved. A larger church was needed, and with one consent the meetings were continued in our church. Never in the present generation has a work of grace been so

Our Four Fathers

Back, left: Rev. Samuel M. Kran, oldest living former pastor

Back, right: Hon. Joseph P. Graham, President Board of Trustees since 1874

Front, left: Professor William Wells, Superintendent Sunday School twenty-five years

Front, right: Giles S. Bartholomew, connected with this church since 1826

Top, left: Two, early Sunday School Primary Teachers. The Misses Louisa M. and Adeline Clark

Top, right: Miss Leansia M. Clark in old age; Superintendent Primary Department for fifty years



spontaneous and so irresistible. The disciples "went everywhere preaching the word." Men and women of culture and refinement went even into the saloons, preaching the gospel in song and in exhortation. They went always with good will and courtesy, and were received everywhere with kindness. The city was deeply stirred, and many began the Christian life.

At the end of the same year, Dr. William J. Dawson, the famous English evangelist, held a series of meetings in Schenectady, part of them in our church. The number of conversions was not so large as in the great meetings of the preceding winter, but the results were important and notable.

In 1903, Dr. W. C. Kitchin became superintendent of the Sunday school, and held the office for two years. Dr. Kitchin had had much experience in Sunday school work, and greatly enlarged the possibilities of the school by grading it and giving it a completer and more efficient organization. At this time it was found necessary to hold the sessions of the senior department in the auditorium of the church, and it became apparent that the needs of a modern Sunday school had outgrown the equipment of a church only thirty years old.

In the same year, 1903, a great change was made in methods of church business, by a new organization of the official board of the church. For a number of years the trustees, who once had had full control of the material affairs of the church, had been gradually relinquishing the authority and power they once possessed, and now, by consenting to and participating in the making of the new organization, they surrendered everything but the powers which they are required, by law, to exercise. By vote of the quarterly conference, June 1, 1903, a constitution was adopted for the official board by which provision was made for the transaction by the official board and its committees, of all business which is not entrusted to the quarterly conference or the board of trustees by the discipline of the church and the laws of the state.

More money was needed to meet the growing expenses of the church and it was decided not to increase the rentals of the pews, but to leave them at a price which would make it

possible for every one to have a sitting in the church and to ask those who could to give a "freewill offering," weekly, to the church. The new system has been very successful, and the income of the church for current expenses, which was \$4637 in 1900 and \$5689 in 1901, has been, since 1904, \$8500 and more. At first, about two hundred and fifty contributed to the freewill offering, and the number has since increased to three hundred and twenty-five.

The change in methods of church business was accompanied by a change in the character of the records of the official board; these have taken on a good deal of the character of records of a business corporation, and it can easily be imagined that some future investigator, looking for the history of the life of the church in the records, might be led to believe that the church was absorbed in questions of material welfare to the neglect of the weightier matters of the spiritual life. Yet the religious life of the church was never more sound and vigorous than at this very time. This illustrates the difficulty of recovering the most important facts in the history of a church; the greatest events often leave but little trace in written records.

A number of improvements to the church building have been made during the most recent years. In 1904, memorial windows were placed in the auditorium, given by members and friends of the church. In 1906, the prayer room was enlarged by adding to it the space occupied by several smaller rooms adjoining it on the east side, and in the present year, 1907, an oaken floor has been laid in the auditorium and the sweet-toned organ completely restored.

With the rapid growth of the city of Schenectady, Methodism has also grown until now there are in the city six English-speaking churches of our denomination and the vigorous German Methodist Episcopal Church, besides the church in Scotia. The number of members and probationers in these churches is about four thousand. Grace Church, in Mont Pleasant, was organized in the fall of the year 1903, with the approval of the official board of the State street church, and for some months the assistant pastor, Mr. Harned, acted as pastor of the new church. Almost at the same time a committee was



Official Board of the Centennial Year
See key on opposite page

KEY TO OFFICIAL BOARD PICTURE.

Read from left to right.

Beginning at the bottom row (seven) all sitting: Edwin N. Cooke, James Raut, Stillman T. Closson, Robert N. Ramsay, Wildey W. Dutton, Charles Hyson, Edward Smith.

Second row (ten) all sitting: Marvin Doughtey, *Charles F. Rankin*, Clement W. Bailey, James E. Felthousen, Lewis B. Edwards, Joseph B. Graham, William C. Kitchin, H. Roger Hegeman, Lansing DeF. Gates, Benjamin H. Ripton.

Third row (eleven) all standing: Edward L. Fronk, John R. Bowman, *F. Casper Zapf*, Charles MacCulloch, Alexander M. Vedder, Fred Winslow Adams, George E. Mayer, Benedict R. Hatmaker, John B. Packer, Arthur G. Lindley, *Edward A. Cummings*.

Top row (eleven) all standing: Olney Redmond, Charles S. Smith, William Dalton, Walter W. Goddard, Ferdinand G. King, *Fred W. Whitlock*, Charles W. Brown, Arthur H. Burdick, Lucius P. Wood, *Birnie R. Carey*, James Sproat.

NOTE. Names in italics represent those members of the Board, who at about this time became charter members of the Official Board of the new Trinity Church.

The following members of the Board were absent when the picture was taken: Geo. W. Gibson, Geo. P. Rowell, Bert Secor, Olin H. Landreth, and honorary members, Giles S. Barhydt, and William Wells.

appointed to consider the advisability of establishing a new church on upper Union street. This committee made a report upon available sites a year later, but nothing was done until the beginning of this present year, when Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Rankin made the generous gift of a valuable lot on the corner of Brandywine and Eastern avenues as the site for a new church, and Trinity church began what we confidently expect to be a great career. The assistant pastor of the mother church, Le Roy Nelson Taylor, became the first pastor of the new church, and contracts have been let for the building of a magnificent structure that will be worthy of the site and of the location in one of the best quarters of the city. Some of the most faithful and loyal of the members of the old church have gone out to establish the new one, and many kind thoughts and prayers for their welfare and success go with them. A great opportunity is before the new society; to meet it they must undergo great labor and make many sacrifices, but in the end there will be great reward.

During the whole time of the existence of the church in State street, it had been known as the State Street Methodist Episcopal Church; this name appears in the conference minutes and is carved upon a stone tablet on the front of the church. Yet it was known to a few people that the legal title of the church remained as it had been from the beginning, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady." While preparations were making for the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the organization of the church, Dr. Kitchin proposed that the name of the church should be changed to a more definite one and one that would be appropriate whatever the future location of the church might be. Accordingly, by act of the legislature in the winter of 1907, the name of the church was changed to "First Methodist Episcopal Church of the City of Schenectady, New York."

The centennial celebration, with its inquiry into the past, brought many reflections concerning the present opportunities before the church and the possibilities of its future. In order that definite provision might be made for deliberate forethought and careful planning for the future work of the church, the

centennial committee, at the meeting of the official board on the ninth of September in this year, presented the following statement and recommendation:

"The Centennial Committee, in studying the series of events by which our church has grown from small beginnings until it has become a great and powerful organization, have been led to consider the future of the church and the possibility of forming plans which will enable us in coming years to do the greater work which must be done in this great and growing city.

• Schenectady has become a city of strangers; its population is a changing one, of very diverse elements. There is great need of active and continuous evangelistic work, especially among workingmen who have practically no church relations, and foreigners. This would be missionary work, and could not be self-supporting. Our church has done a great deal to meet the demands of new conditions, but a greater work remains which will require completer organization, better material equipment, and more money. To meet the greater expenses, the church should have an endowment which would provide a constant income in addition to the annual contributions of its members.

For these future needs, then, the church should plan for one of two things: First, to rebuild the present church and provide an endowment for its work; or, Second, to sell the existing property, build again in a less expensive, yet central, location, and secure an endowment out of the proceeds of the sale.

The Centennial Committee recommends that the board refer this matter to some committee with instructions that it give consideration to the facts and ideas presented above, with a view to forming plans for such a development of the work of the church as shall enable it to meet the present and future needs of the city."

The recommendation was adopted and the matter was referred to a committee composed of the finance committee and the centennial committee.

A hundred years have made a great change in the character of the church, in the conditions under which its work must be done, and in the methods by which successful results may be secured. Doubtless our forerunners of 1807 would be surprised at many of our ways. Among other things, the use of individual cups at the communion service, introduced in 1905, would seem strange and, perhaps, more than strange to them. Probably, they would regard us as lax in discipline and lacking in some of the outward manifestations of earnestness in the Christian life, which seemed essential to them. It is true that within twenty years the membership of the church has doubled, but the prayer-meetings are not larger, the class-meetings are included in two groups, and two rooms are large enough to hold all who come; the Sunday school has not increased its numbers, though in some respects its efficiency is greater. These things are due in part to the greater intensity of modern life, with its insistent demands upon the time of busy people. Moreover, the members of the church are widely scattered through the city; many come long distances to the preaching services, too far to send young children, unattended, to Sunday school. Yet there can be no doubt that much of the change is due to the fact that old methods of church work are not wholly adapted to new conditions of life, and new methods have not yet been found to replace them. The Christian life manifests itself in many different ways, and it is the task of the church of the twentieth century to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the men and women of today, not, perhaps, in the same way, but with the same power that it had in the lives of our fathers and mothers a hundred years ago. Never before did the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Schenectady include in its membership so many sincerely Christian men and women, never so many of high character and standing, never has it had so great an influence for good in the city in which it is placed. We look forward to the future with confidence because of our unchanging faith in God our Father, in Jesus Christ our Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit, who, in the twentieth century as in the first, makes real again the life of Jesus in the lives of his disciples.

CHAPTER IV

THE PASTORS OF THE CHURCH, 1839 TO 1874

Success depends upon leadership. The leader of men has power to transmit something of himself to others, and the influence of his life is felt in unnumbered other lives. The First Church has grown to great success because its pastors have been men of devotion, and many of them men of high ability. The life of a preacher contains much of interest, but most of it is unrecorded; the result remains to show that he has not lived in vain. His personal peculiarities are sometimes interesting to his people. A pastor of this church once surprised a quarterly conference by an alliterative report in which he announced that "sister P has been called from paralysis to Paradise." More often, it must be owned, the sensitive nature of an earnest man is wounded by thoughtless or unkind words. One of the most successful pastors of the church, at a revival meeting, made a short, earnest, and telling address; as soon as he sat down, one of his class leaders arose and, addressing the minister, said: "If I should talk as long as you did, I would say something." He then proceeded, but did not say anything. Under all circumstances, the preacher is expected to keep an even mind and temper, to continue his work without faltering or weakness, to compensate by his own faultlessness for the faults of others. Remarkably, in most cases, does he meet the expectation.

Little can be told here of pastoral work in the First Church. An effort has been made to give something of the personal history of the pastors, and to indicate, in some degree, what manner of men they have been. The writer has purposely avoided words of praise, except as these may be a necessary part of description. He regrets that he must omit to mention the names of any of the noble women who have made the parsonage a centre of gracious influences that have blessed the church. Where many are worthy, the few can not be chosen.

The pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Schenectady from 1838 to 1840 was Ephraim Goss, who was born at Amherst, N. H., in 1794, and died at Troy, November 6, 1866. He was converted in 1820 and joined the Presbyterian church, but became a Methodist in 1826. The next year he was licensed to preach and in 1829 was admitted to the New York conference.

Mr. Goss succeeded the great preacher, Noah Levings, as pastor of the church, and while far inferior to his predecessor as a preacher, he carried forward the work by earnestness and faithfulness as a pastor, and the church added largely to its numbers during his pastorate. A curious record of his diligence and thoroughness remains in a list of one hundred and twenty-eight questions prepared by him for the use of the quarterly conference in examination of candidates for recommendation to the annual conference. The questions cover a very wide range, including a demand for an estimate of the population of the earth at the time of the deluge, as compared with the present population. Doubtless the questions served a useful purpose at that time but a layman may be permitted to think that if the present pastor could answer them all, he would not be the popular preacher he is.

After leaving Schenectady Mr. Goss was twice presiding elder and in his ministry had the supreme success of leading hundreds of souls to Christ.

Of the six pastors who followed Ephraim Goss, five left the Troy conference not very long after their pastorates in Schenectady.

Stephen Remington was transferred to the New England conference in 1843, a year after he left Schenectady. Shortly afterwards he became a Baptist preacher and had an honorable career in that church.

John Harwood, a man of English birth, who followed him, ended his ministerial career most unfortunately of all. He was expelled from the conference in 1853.

James Rawson, M. D., who became pastor in 1845, was also an Englishman by birth, and before becoming a preacher

had been a physician. He was a man of education, of literary tastes and gifts, and in preaching was fond of quotation and literary allusion. Like many others of our preachers, he was glad to live in a college town and to have the use of the college library.

Dr. Rawson joined the conference in 1841, withdrew in 1843, was readmitted in 1844, and withdrew again in 1849 in order to enter the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal church.

John Frazer, D. D., who was pastor of the church from 1847 to 1849, was born in Ireland in 1803, admitted to the conference in 1832, and was transferred to Ohio conference in 1855. In 1866 he was transferred to the Southern Illinois conference and died in Lebanon, Ill., Feb. 17, 1871. He was a scholarly man of beautiful character.

Allen Steele was born in 1808, admitted to Troy Conference in 1845, appointed to the Schenectady church in 1849, and at the end of one year transferred to the Genesee conference. Though his stay in the church and in the conference was so short, he made a strong and lasting impression as a man of culture and as a preacher of rare gifts. Among the earlier preachers of the church he is said to have ranked next to Noah Levings. He died Jan. 14, 1873.

Andrew Witherspoon, who was pastor of the church for one year, was born in Scotland in 1808, and died in Williamsburg, Kan., February 9, 1885. His parents were Presbyterians but when he was converted, at the age of sixteen, he joined the Methodist Episcopal church. He was licensed to preach in 1832, and was admitted, on trial, to the Troy conference a year later.

Dr. Witherspoon was an abolitionist, and was accustomed to speak without reserve in criticism of slavery and its friends, and of the conservative action of general and annual conferences. For this he was called to account by the annual conference, and several times dramatic scenes occurred as he defended himself with ability and success. His anti-slavery views excited such opposition in Schenectady that his pastorate was terminated at the end of the first year.

Dr. Witherspoon was twice presiding elder, and was a member of six general conferences. He was not ambitious for himself, and when, at one general conference, he received a considerable vote for the office of bishop, he declined to be considered as a candidate. When, in 1856, the University of Vermont gave him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, he declined it, but the next year it was conferred again, a fitting tribute to his strong intellect and scholarly ability. As a preacher, he attracted thoughtful men, and others were held by his sincerity and earnestness. Though so positive in his opinions and the expression of them, he was dignified and courteous, and commanded respect and admiration.

Barnes M. Hall was born in Orwell, Vt., in 1803, and died in Crescent, N. Y., February 22, 1886. He was converted in his twenty-eighth year, and joined Troy conference in 1834. He was twice presiding elder and three times a delegate to the general conference. He was an anti-slavery man, and on one occasion his character was "arrested" before the conference because of the expression of his anti-slavery views, but finally passed.

Mr. Hall was not a scholar, nor a great preacher, but a man of good sense and kindly heart, faithful in all his work. In Schenectady, as elsewhere, a revival crowned his work.

Henry Lord Starks was born in Austerlitz, N. Y., where his parents were among the first members of the Methodist Episcopal church, in 1801. He was one of three men who have been twice pastor of the Schenectady church. He became presiding elder of the Albany district, and was twice a delegate to the general conference. He had not the advantage of much education in schools, but was a man of studious habits and received the degree of Master of Arts from the University of Vermont. He was a good pastor, and a fair preacher. He died in Waterford, June 20, 1882.

"Merritt Bates was born in 1806 and joined New York conference in 1827. He was emphatically a self-made man. With little aid from the schools he wrought out for himself not only a solid English education, but made substantial progress in the ancient classics. In 1836 Middlebury College

conferred on him the honorary degree of Master of Arts, which he modestly declined. He retired from the active ministry in 1863 and died in 1869.

"He was pastor of many of our leading churches, and for four years presiding elder of Burlington District.

"He was a man of positive views, and one who had the 'courage of his convictions,' and on one subject he had very emphatic convictions: he was a pronounced abolitionist, and because he thought his church not sufficiently radical on the slavery question he withdrew in 1843 from its ministry and membership. He became convinced of his error, however, and in 1850 returned to the church and was received in a manner alike honorable to the conference and himself. Four years later he was appointed pastor of this church and served it faithfully two years. He was an instructive preacher, a wise counselor, a faithful pastor."¹

Mr. Bates suffered much for his abolitionist views, even after coming to Schenectady. After retiring from active work he lived upon a farm near Traverse City, Mich., where he died.

Joseph K. Cheesman, M. D., was born, in 1817, in Kingston, Ont., of American parents temporarily in Canada. He obtained his academic education at Cazenovia Seminary, and then studied medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York city. Being called to preach, he joined the Genesee conference in 1846, and ten years later was transferred to Troy conference; Schenectady was his first appointment here and after an interval of four years he again became the pastor of the Schenectady church. In the first year of his first pastorate a burdensome debt was paid and in the second year a great revival added over a hundred to the church.

Dr. Cheesman was a great reader of books, and a thoughtful and eloquent preacher. He was a man of great and sincere faith; his beautiful character, together with his intellectual gifts, made companionship with him a delight. In 1874 he

¹ Contributed by the Rev. George W. Brown, D.D., who was converted under the preaching of Mr. Bates in the old church in Liberty street.



Some Pastors of the Church in Liberty Street
1. Ephraim C. '38, '39; 2. John Harwood, '42, '43; 3. Andrew Witherspoon, '44; 4. John Frazer, '47, '48; 5. Allen Steele, '49;
6. Barnes M. Hall, '50, '51; 7. Henry L. Starks, '52, '53 and '60, '61; 8. Merritt Bates, '54, '55; 9. Joseph K. Cheesman,
'56, '57 and '62, '63; 10. Samuel McKean, '58, '59; 11. Andrew J. Jutkins, '64-'66; 12. Frederick Widmer, '67, '68;
13. Joel W. Eaton, '69-'71. Excepting Stephen Remington, '40, '41 and James Rawson, '45, '46, the list of
portraits is complete from 1838 to 1871.

was superannuated because of poor health and went to live at Red Bank, N. J., where he practised as a homeopathic physician until his death, May 19, 1895. He is buried in Schenectady.

With the pastorate of Samuel McKean, 1858 to 1860, we come to modern times, for Dr. McKean still survives in vigorous old age, the dean of our living pastors. He was born in the town of Old Saratoga, N. Y., in 1826, was admitted to Troy conference in 1852, and retired from the active ministry in 1906. He has twice been presiding elder, and was a delegate to the general conference of 1880.

Dr. McKean is still a polished and effective speaker, and a gentleman of rare dignity and courtesy of manner. Union College recognized his scholarly gifts and attainments by conferring upon him, in 1879, the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

During his pastorate in Schenectady Dr. McKean took great interest in the history of the church and was the means of recovering some important facts of the early history of Methodism in Schenectady which would otherwise have been lost. These facts were incorporated in a sermon delivered March 11, 1860, which was published by the board of trustees and reprinted, with additions by Lockwood Hoyt, in 1884. Again, at the centennial celebration, Dr. McKean gave a historical address.

His father, Samuel McKean, was the founder of the church in Schenectady, and Dr. McKean himself did much, by his personal qualities, to hold all that Methodism had gained in the city, and to give it a higher standing in the community.

Andrew J. Jutkins, D. D., was born in Washington county, New York, in 1829, and was admitted to Troy conference in 1854. In 1867, at the expiration of his pastoral term in Schenectady, he was transferred to Rock River conference and appointed to Grace church, Chicago. For three years he was a member of the Kentucky conference and pastor at Lexington, when he returned to Rock River. He was highly esteemed in his conference, and from 1873 to 1877 was presiding elder of the Chicago district. Failing health caused him to retire

from the active ministry in 1892, and a year later he removed to Los Angeles, Cal., where he died March 2, 1901.

Dr. Jutkins was a man of earnest spirit and dauntless courage, ready to oppose evil in any form. In Schenectady he was much troubled by what seemed to him the apathy of many in the church, but his faithful labors brought about an improvement which he recognized with gratitude. In the West he became an ardent prohibitionist and worked with all his might against what he believed to be the great crime of the age. He was an excellent preacher, positive without fanaticism, and, withal, a man of gentle spirit whom those who differed with him still could love.

During his pastorate, the first steps were taken toward the building of the church in State street.

Frederick Widmer was born in Troy in 1835; his parents were Swiss, and his father had been a soldier of Napoleon. He died in Salem, N. Y., June 25, 1891, while pastor of Grace church, Troy, after an operation for cancer in the throat.

He was converted and joined the church at eleven years of age. Called to preach while working at the machinist's trade, he gained an education partly at the Troy Conference Academy and partly by private study, spurred on by his unwearying love of learning. He joined the Troy conference in 1860, from 1871 to 1878 was a member of the Black River and Northern New York conferences and in 1878 returned to his old conference.

Mr. Widmer was a man of wide reading, and was fond of quoting from books in his preaching. His sermons were very suggestive and his active and inquiring mind raised many questions more difficult to answer than to ask. He was a man of generous nature, and gained for himself many warm friendships. His pastorate was in the later days of the Liberty street church, and his deep religious faith and earnest attention to all the needs of the church had no small part in preparing the people for the work before them.

Joel W. Eaton, a brother of Homer Eaton, the Publishing Agent, was born in Enosburg, Vt., in 1831. He was con-

verted and joined the church when eleven years of age, was licensed to preach at twenty-one, and became a member of Troy conference in 1857. He is a graduate of the Concord Biblical Institute, which is now the School of Theology of Boston University, and was made a Doctor of Sacred Theology by Wesleyan University.

He was a member of the general conferences of 1876, 1888, and 1892, official reporter of the general conferences from 1860 to 1872, and on the editorial staff of the "Daily Christian Advocate" in those years. For two years he was associate editor of the "Northern Christian Advocate." In 1862 and 1863 he was chaplain of the 169th Regiment, N. Y. S. V., and three times he has been presiding elder.

For many years Dr. Eaton has been one of the strong men of the conference. A man of sound judgment, with a firm grasp upon facts and principles, he was a safe and wise leader. He was an effective preacher, and a spiritual guide who led many into the kingdom of God. In Dr. Eaton's pastorate in Schenectady the church in State street was begun and carried far toward completion; in the midst of the work of building the church was blessed with a gracious revival.

CHAPTER V

THE PASTORS OF THE CHURCH, 1874 TO 1907

The last pastor of the church in Liberty street and the first of the State street church, was David W Gates, who was born in Mount Pleasant, Pa. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University, having received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1863, and of Master of Arts in 1866. In 1895, Syracuse University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Dr. Gates has twice held the office of presiding elder, and was a member of the general conference of 1888. He was admitted to Troy conference in 1862, and ten years later became pastor of the church in Schenectady. When he began his pastorate here, the new church was roofed over, but there was no spire yet; during the next two years the church was completed and dedicated, as has already been told. The third year of the pastorate was given to successful spiritual work. The congregations were large and the prayer-meetings were earnest and well attended. Pastor and people worked together in complete harmony and the church in its new home was guided well by the calm Christian spirit of its pastor.

The name of George J. Brown recalls to many still in the church a man of rare gifts of mind and spirit, and the sad tragedy which ended his earthly career. He was born in 1839 and died in the Utica State Hospital on the first of December, 1880. He was converted at eighteen, but before being called to the work of the ministry, studied law and was admitted to the bar. Hearing then the higher call, he became a student in Wesleyan University. He preached while still in college and overwork brought on a fever which left him with a disordered mind. For two years he was in an asylum; then he recovered, returned to college and was graduated. After completing his theological training at Drew Theological Seminary, he joined Troy conference in 1868. Two years after he left Schenectady there were indications of a return of



The Ten Pastors of the Church in State Street, 1872-1907

Upper Row, left to right: David W. Gates, '72-'74; George J. Brown, '75-'76; William J. Heath, '77-'79
William H. Hughes, '80-'82 and '86, '87; George A. Barrett, '83-'85
Lower Row: Charles D. Hills, '88-'90; Charles V. Grismer, '91-'93; Henry Graham, '96-'99;
Francis T. Brown, 1900-01; Fred Winslow Adams, 1902—

the old trouble, and in the next year, 1880, he became again insane and his life ceased without a return of reason.

Mr. Brown possessed unusual intellectual powers, and preached with rare beauty of language and thought. He was a man of extraordinary consecration, devotion, and goodness, and few pastors have won so much of the personal affection of their people.

William J. Heath was admitted to the Troy conference in 1857 and served a number of churches in this conference until 1886 when he was transferred to the New England conference and appointed pastor of the church in Springfield, Mass. His pastoral record is remarkable for the number of long pastorates; five times in the Troy conference he served for the full time then allowed, three years, and three times in the New England conference his pastorates have continued for five years, with one other of four years. He is a Master of Arts of Union College, and has been a frequent contributor to church papers.

Mr. Heath was pastor in Schenectady during the very trying time of financial stress, but his powers as a preacher held large congregations throughout, and the large attendance of young men at the evening service was especially notable. It was during his pastorate that it was found necessary to enforce the law forbidding the placing of chairs in the aisles.

George A. Barrett was born in North Fairfax, Vt., in 1845 and died at Lake Placid, N. Y., August 12, 1902. Mr. Barrett was a graduate of the University of Vermont, having taken the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy in 1873. In 1885 the same university conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts. Before becoming a preacher he was a teacher, and had been principal of the Port Henry High School and of the State Normal School at Castleton, Vt.

In 1876 he became a member of Troy conference and was pastor of a number of important churches. He was presiding elder of Plattsburg District from 1891 to 1896 and was a delegate to the general conferences of 1892 and 1896.

Mr. Barrett was an excellent preacher and pastor, a man of beautiful character, a courteous gentleman. In Schenec-

tady as elsewhere he was esteemed for his ability and loved for his goodness and helpfulness.

William H. Hughes was born in Albany in 1839. Converted when seventeen years of age, he became a member of Troy conference in 1863. Dr. Hughes's two pastorates in Schenectady were both of great importance to the church. The beginning of the first marks a turning-point in the financial history of the church in State street and at its close occurred the greatest revival in the modern history of the church. During the second pastorate the church was freed from debt. In both pastorates the congregations were large and the prayer-meetings unusually good. The young people received careful attention, and were organized in the Oxford League. Dr. Hughes was conspicuously good in three qualities not often united in one man. He was an exceptionally capable financier and administrator. As a thoughtful, instructive and convincing preacher he has probably not been excelled in our pulpit. In prayer-meeting and revival meeting he was a spiritual leader and evangelist under whose guidance hundreds entered into the joy of salvation.

He is a man of marked intellectual powers and of wide reading in the best literature. His scholarly attainments have been fitly recognized by academic honors, Union College having conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts, and Wesleyan University that of Doctor of Divinity.

At the end of the second year of his second pastorate in Schenectady Dr. Hughes was appointed presiding elder of the Troy district, and was later presiding elder of the Saratoga district. He has been a member of five general conferences.

Charles Dudley Hills was born in East Hartford, Conn., in 1836. He was converted and joined the church in 1853, and the next year was licensed as a local preacher. During the next six years he prepared for college, supporting himself by teaching, and preaching frequently with much success. In 1863 he was graduated from Wesleyan University with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and later received the degree of Master of Arts. Claflin University conferred upon him the

degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology in 1885. For two years after his graduation from college he was principal of the high school in Westfield, Mass., and supply preacher in the Methodist church there, the pastor having become colonel of a Massachusetts regiment. In the summer vacation of 1864 he served as a delegate of the Christian Commission in the Ninth Army Corps, and was present at the explosion of the mine in the lines before Petersburg. He joined the New England conference in 1865, and continued to be a member of that conference for twenty years, when he was transferred to the Troy conference.

In Schenectady he was a faithful pastor and made many friends. The large congregations overcrowded the church, and the Albany street church was begun. At the end of his pastorate Dr. Hills was sick and in a hospital at Pittsfield for several months. In a recent letter he speaks feelingly of the kindness shown to him by the Schenectady church during that trying time.

In 1891 he was transferred to the New Hampshire conference, and retired from the active work of the ministry in 1906. In the same year he was greatly afflicted by the death of his wife. His residence is at Malden, Mass.

Charles Valentine Grismer was born at Newtonville, N. Y., in 1852. He is a graduate of Drew Theological Seminary and was made, in 1900, a Doctor of Divinity by Syracuse University. He was admitted to Troy conference in 1880, and was the first to serve as pastor of this church for five years, which was then the legal limit of time.

During the first year of Dr. Grismer's pastorate the parsonage was built and he was its first occupant. A year later the panic of 1893 occurred, making the task of church finance a difficult one; notwithstanding this, improvements were made in the church building, and unexpected willingness to bear the burden was found in the people, due largely to the feeling of loyalty which the pastor had fostered.

Dr. Grismer was strong in every department of church work. He was a vigorous and interesting preacher, continuously at-

tracting and holding large congregations; in constant pastoral work he became acquainted with his people and their needs; he was the friend and leader of the young people in the Oxford League, and even found time to teach a large class of men in the Sunday school.

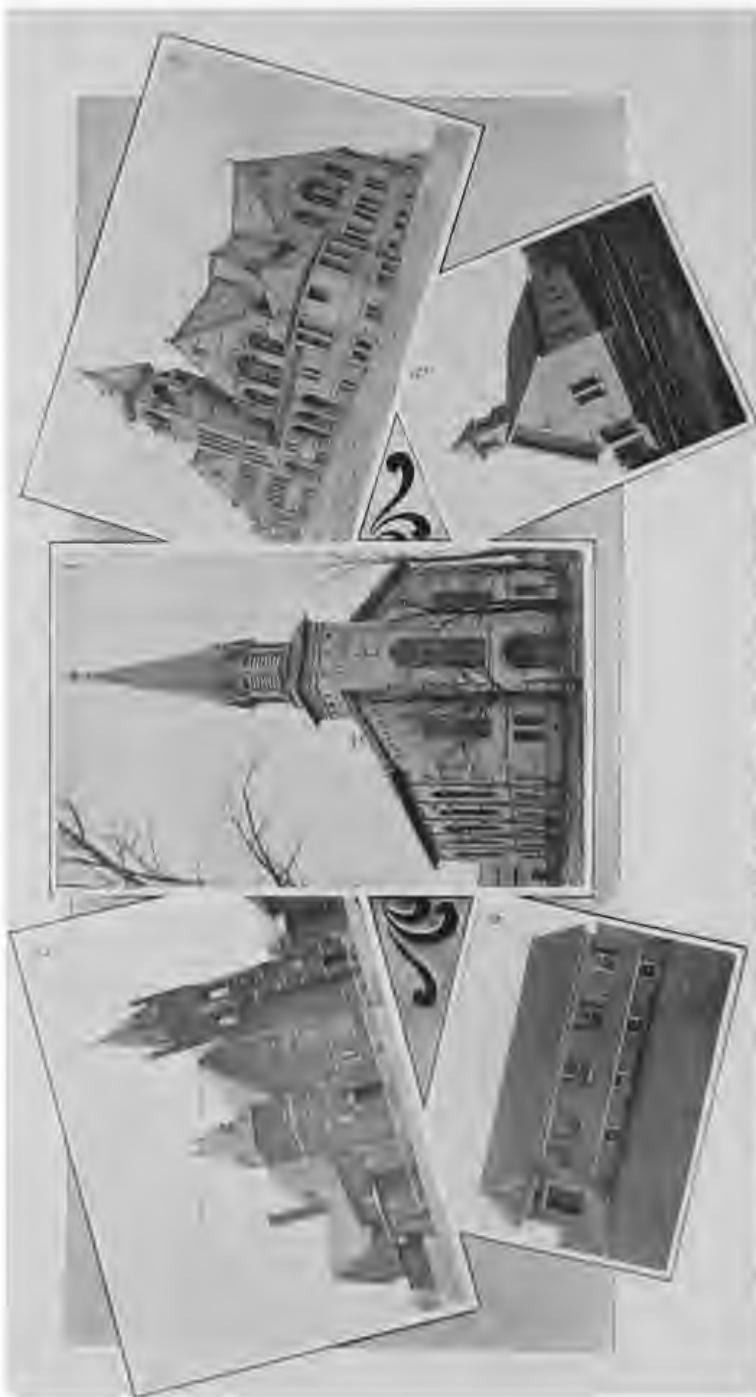
During his life in Schenectady, Dr. Grismer made some extensive travels. In his first summer vacation he visited Alaska, and in his fifth year the church gave him a vacation of four months and procured a supply for the pulpit while he traveled in Europe and the Holy Land.

He has been presiding elder of Plattsburg district since 1903 and was a delegate to the general conference of 1904.

The two pastors next following, different though they are in many ways, are alike in being the scholars of the later years of the church. Henry Graham was born in 1841; he is a brother of Joseph B. Graham, and was licensed to preach by the Schenectady quarterly conference on the twenty-seventh day of February, 1864, while he was a student at Union College. He was a soldier of the Civil War, returned home at the point of death, upon his recovery entered college and was graduated in 1866 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. He is also a graduate of Drew Theological Seminary, and continued his theological studies in Scotland and Germany. Syracuse University conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity upon him in 1883 and he has been for many years a trustee of that university. He has been a presiding elder and a member of several general conferences. He is the author of several articles in McClintock and Strong's Biblical Cyclopedias and of two books written since his retirement from the active work of the ministry, "Old Truths Newly Illustrated," and "The Preacher and his Work." He has also contributed many articles to the "Christian Advocate," the "Methodist Review," and other periodicals.

Dr. Graham's army service permanently impaired his health, but a strong constitution and a vigorous will enabled him to do more than an ordinary amount of work until the second year of his Schenectady pastorate. Then illness led him to

Some Methodist Churches of the City
1. German, erected 1871; 2. Albany Street, erected, 1901; 3. Trinity, erection begun, 1907; 4. Brackenbury, erected 1907;
5. Union Street, erected 1900



announce that he would ask to be appointed to some lighter charge, but the church requested him to remain and agreed to engage an assistant pastor. The Rev. George K. Statham became Dr. Graham's assistant, and later became his son-in-law. In the last year of his pastorate, returning from a trip to Europe, Dr. Graham fell to the deck of the steamer and suffered an injury which has left him permanently lame.

The reader of Dr. Graham's books will easily discover some of his characteristic qualities which he doubtless owed to his Scotch ancestry; a practical mind with powers of clear perception, and a rich vein of humor. He was also a profoundly religious man and his sermons treated the great questions of religious faith in a way that made them helpful in the daily life of the believer. He was a capable administrator, a faithful pastor, and great additions were made to the church during his ministry.

Francis Theodore Brown was born in Troy, N. Y., in 1869, and is a son of the Rev. George W. Brown, D. D., of the Troy conference. Mr. Brown is a graduate of Yale University, a Bachelor of Arts of the class of 1891. His classmates honored him by electing him class orator, and his scholarship won him the high distinction of election to Phi Beta Kappa. After taking his degree he was a graduate student at Yale for two years and then studied for one year each at Drew Theological Seminary and at the Boston University School of Theology. He has been a contributor to the "Methodist Review." He was admitted to Troy conference in 1896, and Schenectady was his first important appointment. His success was immediate. His sermons revealed the man of books, but his earnestness and his wide human sympathies made them interesting to large congregations. Mr. Brown was a man of charming personal traits, and made and kept many warm personal friends.

He found the burden of the large and growing church in the bustling life of the busy city, a severe tax upon his strength. Keenly appreciating the greatness of the work that might be done here, and believing that another might do what seemed impossible to himself, he accepted a transfer to the New York

East conference, and was appointed pastor of the church at Middletown, Conn. He is now pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal church in New Haven.

The present pastor of the church, Fred Winslow Adams, is the son of the Rev. True P. Adams, a superannuated member of the Maine conference. Dr. Adams was born in Belfast, Me., in 1866, studied as an undergraduate student in Boston University and was afterward a student at Harvard and at Yale. In 1905 he was given the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Syracuse University. In his earlier years he was engaged in newspaper work and even then made a reputation as a lecturer which he has since extended. He was for two years one of the lecturers at the Boston School of Oratory.

When called to the ministry, Dr. Adams joined the New York East conference and came to us by transfer from the Epworth church of New Haven. He at once proved himself to be a popular preacher in every good sense of that term. The congregations, large at first, grew until they filled the house, and the sixth year of his pastorate sees no change. As a preacher, Dr. Adams is quiet in manner, but often speaks with great dramatic power. He has an alert and appreciative mind, is liberal in thought, and finds unexpected ways of making the gospel message apply to the life of this present day. He is strongly evangelistic in his preaching and his methods of church work, and was one of the leaders of the great revival of 1905, which owed much to his earnestness and wisdom. He is a lover of music and during his administration the church music has been better than ever before, and the whole service has assumed a new dignity and impressiveness. As a man, Dr. Adams is calm, quiet, and self-controlled. As a citizen, he has been one of the leaders of the best public sentiment. The great progress of the church during these recent years has already been told, and it is largely due to the pastor that the church recognizes the greatness of its duty and its opportunity in this industrial city, and has done so much to meet the opportunity in fulfilling its duty.



FRED WINSLOW ADAMS

PART THIRD

**TRANSACTIONS AND ADDRESSES OF THE CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION, MAY 2nd-12th, 1907**

EDITED BY REV. FRED WINSLOW ADAMS, D. D.

1807

1907

A

Centennial Memorial of

Richard Clute

Born Dec. 2, 1770—died Sept. 2, 1849

and his wife Mary McMichael

Born Feb. 21, 1777—died Feb. 26, 1862

in whose home on Green Street

the First Methodist Episcopal Church

of Schenectady

was organized in the year 1807

“Our Methodist people in Schenectady are now weak and few, but God is with us and, if our zeal faint not, we shall some day be many and strong.”—*Richard Clute in 1807.*

Inscription on the Condé Memorial Tablet.

TRANSACTIONS AND ADDRESSES OF THE
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

THE MONTHS OF PREPARATION

The first Quarterly Conference of 1906, held June 1st, voted to observe in a fitting manner the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of this church, and appointed a Centennial Committee of three, whose names have already been given in this volume, to make the necessary preparations and to have general charge of the exercises connected with the celebration.

From time to time, during the following months, this committee reported to the Official Board the progress that they were making and brought in recommendations. The two most important of these were:—first, that the Board authorize the writing and the publication of a centennial volume, containing the history of the church and an account of the anniversary transactions; second, that the celebration begin the evening of May 2nd, 1907, and close the evening of May 12th. The reason for selecting this time was that May 2nd marked the one hundredth anniversary of the opening session of the New York Annual Conference at which the old Schenectady circuit of 1789 was re-established and the organization of this church, during the month previous, was officially recognized.

The above two recommendations were adopted by the Official Board, and the Centennial Committee proceeded with the work of preparation for both book and celebration, and the latter was held, at the time designated, May 2nd-12th.¹

But preparatory exercises had been held beginning the first of January for the four months preceding May, in the form of an evening historical class, conducted by Dr. W. C. Kitchin. In appropriate lessons, the history of our church was reviewed from the coming of Thomas Webb in 1766 to the year 1840. In addition to the lessons and talks by Dr. Kitchin on the history of the local church, W. C. Koon's "Short History of Methodism"

¹ During the month preceding the celebration, the following invitation was sent to former pastors and to all former parishioners whose addresses could be obtained:

1807 The First Methodist Episcopal Church 1907
of Schenectady, New York
requests the honor of your presence
at its One hundredth Anniversary Exercises
from May the second to the twelfth
one thousand nine hundred and seven.

was used as a text book. Papers on special topics were given by members of the class.

There were also talks to the class by Dr. Samuel McKean, pastor here, 1858, 1859, on "Memories of Old Time Methodism in Schenectady," and by Mrs. W. W. Condé on "Memories of Richard Clute and Wife." Relics and curios were exhibited to the class, the most noteworthy being Richard Clute's family Bible, used by the Methodists, a century before, in their first meetings in his home on Green street. The pastor co-operated with this class, preaching three historical sermons.

1. "Why We Celebrate Our Centennial."
2. "The Soldier-Saint: Captain Thomas Webb."²
3. "The Prince of Circuit Riders: Freeborn Garrettson."

THE CENTENNIAL

The celebration proper began with the evening of May 2nd, and continued through Sunday, May 12th. The quartette furnished music each evening, assisted by a chorus under direction of the organist, and augmented by the Sunday School orchestra.

These three bodies consisted of the following persons: Mrs. J. William Loane, Organist and Director; Mrs. Fred Winslow Adams, Soprano; Miss Ida Gardner Greason, Alto; Mr. John Heywood, Tenor; Mr. Frank E. Gage, Baritone; assisted by Mrs. William Thorpe, Mrs. A. H. Burdick, Mrs. Ira Zimmerman, Miss Wilma Griffith, Mr. J. C. Peet, Mr. E. Weber, Mr. A. H. Burdick, Mr. A. E. Packer. Sunday School Orchestra: Mr. Silas S. Stone, Director; Violins, Paul Lovejoy, J. C. Henkle, B. C. Anthony, E. J. France; Viola, L. Silberburg; Cellos, L. O. Gordon, H. B. Spencer; Bass, L. O. Ripley; Flute, W. W. Dutton; Oboe, I. J. Zimmerman; Clarionet, A. P. Dunn; Cornets, S. S. Stone, W. K. Dickenson; Trombone, H. R. Whitman; Piano, Miss Helena Shultes.

The church was beautifully decorated with palms and roses. The souvenir programmes were artistic, and the large edition prepared by the committee was soon exhausted and copies were selling at a considerable premium. The anniversary meetings were enlivened by the presence of former pastors and prominent Methodists from the vicinity.

Letters of regret were received from well-known Methodists, including the following from the Vice-President of the United States:

VICE PRESIDENT'S CHAMBERS,
WASHINGTON, Mar. 20th, '07.

My Dear Mr. Adams:—

Your note of the 14th inst. inviting me to preside and make the opening address at a meeting to be held in commemoration of the

² See p. 145.

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL

1807 Church 1907

Schenectady,
New York.

*One Hundredth
Anniversary*

MAY 2-12, 1907



"The Lord
our God be
with us as
He was with
our Fathers,"



FRONT COVER OF CENTENNIAL PROGRAMME

centennial anniversary of your church on the evening of May 6th or 7th is received.

I wish I were free to accept your invitation, as it would give me pleasure to join with you in the interesting celebration, but demands already upon me are such as to preclude the possibility of my acceptance.

I wish you a most delightful occasion in every respect. I cannot tell you how sorry I am that I cannot join you.

Very cordially yours,
CHARLES W. FAIRBANKS.

Letters of congratulation were received from sister churches. One is of special interest. The new Trinity Church, organized by some prominent members of this church, to care for the growing residential section of the eighth and eleventh wards, held its first public worship Sunday morning, April 21st, in the temporary building erected on Brandywine avenue. The congregation of the First Church, by a rising vote, forwarded congratulations to the new church. A response came during the centennial week:

"Resolved, That this Society transmit to the First Church full acknowledgement of the kind and tender greetings conveyed in the message received at the time of the first services recently held by the newly organized church, and do hereby express therefor the heartfelt and full appreciation of the entire membership of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church.

GEORGE S. CLARE,
Secretary."

The press of the city extended congratulations, as these two editorials indicate:

The *Daily Gazette* of May 7th:

A CENTURY OF GRAND WORK

"One hundred years have travelled into the past and lie in the shadows of a traversed path since the foundation of the First Methodist Church of Schenectady. That century has been one of the most remarkable in the history of the world; its progress will be a theme for historians of the future.

"It has also brought a wonderful change to the quiet little community nestled on the banks of the Mohawk. From the small settlement of a century ago to the bustling city of today is a far cry.

"Methodism in Schenectady has grown with the city. Who in that little congregation that met for prayer in the home of Richard Clute, and from which started the formation of the first church organization of the denomination here, could believe his eyes if he saw the fine church edifices and the large congregations that were to come as its result?

"Ten decades of service dedicated to the work of bringing men into a sense of their relationship to God needs no encomium. Its material results are shown in the fact that the parent church has the largest membership of any Methodist church in this section, and it has sent and is sending forth other strong churches; it

was never more active than to-day. Its spiritual results no man can tell."

The *Evening Star* of May 13th had the following:

"The centennial exercises of the founding of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, which has brought to this city so many eminent people during the past fortnight, closed yesterday.

"This has been a notable occasion.

"From humble beginnings in a Green street cottage, the denomination has grown until numerically it outnumbers the Methodist population of any other city between New York and Rochester. The First Church has the largest individual membership of any Methodist society in the State outside of Greater New York and but four metropolitan churches exceed it in membership. Its chief offspring ranks among the first half dozen outside Greater New York and within ten years past five other Methodist churches have been established.

"The success of the denomination here is due in part to the strategic points which it has occupied. Its first church stands where the business section of the city gives way to the residence portion and where tens of thousands of people pass daily. It has been guided with wisdom both from the pulpit and from the pew and is to-day an institution of which the city at large is justly proud."

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY SECOND

OUR CHURCH NIGHT

The programme proper opened on Thursday evening, May 2nd. The presiding officer on the opening night of our celebration was the Hon. Joseph B. Graham, President of the Board of Trustees.

Our history was reviewed in two addresses, "The Coming of the Methodists," by W. C. Kitchin, Ph.D., and "Three Score Years and Ten," by Dean B. H. Ripton, Ph.D., LL.D. Dr. Kitchin's paper covered the pre-organization period, 1766-1807, and the history of the church to 1839, from which point Dean Ripton brought the history down to the present date. These papers are not given, as what was said is included in Parts First and Second of this volume. They were preceded by a paper by Miss Minette H. Hegeman, which was as follows:

THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF SCHENECTADY, OTHER THAN METHODIST, FROM 1766 TO 1840

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the environment in which Methodism in Schenectady grew from the first glimmer under the preaching of Captain Thomas Webb⁸ in 1766 to the steady light of 1839 when it had become firmly established. At the time of the first Methodist preaching in 1766, there were three religious bodies in Schenectady, the Reformed Nether Dutch, organized probably before 1674; the Episcopilians, for many years previous served by chaplains of the British troops

⁸ See Appendix, p. 145, "Thomas Webb, Not a Captain."



Church in State Street, 1907

From photograph taken after the Centennial Celebration, showing the Captain Thomas Webb Club Tablet to the left of center door

in the fort or from Albany, but with a new stone church and an application filed for a missionary, and the Presbyterians, worshiping in the new Episcopal Church under the occasional ministrations of a missionary from Albany.

In the nearly one hundred years of its existence before 1766, the Dutch Church had had several regular pastors (the first one was killed in the massacre of 1690) and many supplies from Albany, Kingston, New Paltz, and New York, and had worshiped in three buildings, the first destroyed in the massacre fire, the second finished in 1703 and remodeled into a fort, barracks, and market in 1734, when the one used in 1766 was finished. For nearly ninety years this was the only church in the field. No serious difficulties were met in its organization and maintenance, and it came to be one of the most heavily endowed churches in the state. In accordance with the custom of the day, the 1703 and 1734 buildings stood in the streets on sites later sold to the city for State and Union streets, and in 1766 the church also owned a brick parsonage on the present church site. In 1788 the church was crowded and pews began to be rented in the gallery, the respectability of which had formerly been questioned, because none but boys and negroes sat there. Before 1792 the church was warmed only by individual foot-stoves, but then two large stoves were put in which were soon put on the floor level, but at first were used on platforms at the gallery height, thus successfully heating only the top of the room. These stoves were replenished at the beginning of the sermon by the sexton, who made all the noise possible in order to impress people with the dignity of his office. In 1794 a determined effort was made by the consistory to improve the congregational singing at service, and in response to an insistent and increasing demand which indicates the passing of the old order of things money was appropriated to buy a "Great English Bible" for use in the service. Rev. Jacob Van Vechten says in a reminiscent letter—"Dr. Romeyn" (whose glory it was to inspire the organization of Union College) "was the last pastor who preached stately in our native language. Meier was minister in 1805, often heard him preach in English, very seldom, if at all, in Dutch. Mr. Bogardus (1808-1812) gave us good plain sermons, altogether in English." Before 1800 the church owned the burying ground of the city (but graves of special sanctity could be purchased in the church) and in 1800 the church purchased the first hearse which was rented at fixed rates. Previous to 1810 the bell was rung three times before service, and again at the close, that the servants at home might have the dinner ready on their master's return. In 1807 the church was very crowded and a new one urged. This was completed in 1814, on the present site and strangely enough was only sixteen feet longer than the old one.

The English Church was the second in the field, and St. George's Episcopal Church (supposedly so named from the patron saint of England whence came John W. Brown, "the Father of this Parish"), begun in 1759 and finished several years later in much its present exterior form, received its first resident rector in 1771 when there were only twenty communicants in the congregation of eighty adults, and its rector reports it as "one of the poorest missions on the continent."

But Mr. Brown and Sir William Johnson, the General Superintendent for British Indian affairs in North America, stood as firm friends of the church, Sir William contributing and collecting funds for its building, acting as trustee, and tradition says often occupying a canopied pew at service here. During the Revolution, services were suspended here, the church fell into decay, and the congregation scattered, because the English rector was dutiful in his prayers for the king. After peace returned, the church was repaired, the parish reorganized, and regular rectors again stationed here, one of whom from 1806 to 1819 was Rev. Cyrus Stebbins, a former Methodist preacher of Albany. The long struggle for existence was over and continued prosperity began, for in the following years a rectory was purchased, and, as more sittings became necessary, the church building was enlarged, galleries erected, and a house purchased for the meeting place of the Sunday school. Some of the early Methodist meetings were held in this "neat stone church," which to-day is famed as "the most perfect example of Colonial ecclesiastical architecture on the Continent."

The Presbyterians had some misunderstanding with the Episcopalians about their joint use of St. George's church and, from 1767 held meetings occasionally in a hired building till their own church was finished in 1773. The size of the congregation is unknown. The church suffered greatly during the war, and, for some years after, had only occasional supplies (one of whom, Rev. Mr. Ball, with some of his people, later settled Ballston) or regular pastors who left because their salaries were unpaid. Severe dissension, resulting in the secession of twenty-four families, arose because one minister read his sermons "contrary to Luke 4: 16-23 where our Lord preached without notes. We never had such preaching here before, nothing but like the reading of an almanack." Another strife followed over the call of John Joyce, an Irish Methodist lay preacher, but the Presbytery refused to settle him. In spite of these schisms a steady growth then began, due to the assistance of the college faculty, a new church was built in 1809, two hundred forty-seven were added to the communion roll before 1821 when three great forward steps were taken in the abolition of the lead "tokens" designed to prevent strangers or members under discipline from coming to communion, the relinquishment of the old Rouse's Psalm Book, and the completion in 1824 of a "Session House," opposed by many who disapproved of prayer meetings, and other "new fangled ideas" such as the Sunday schools, which originally had been intended for the secular education solely of those children who worked or were too poor to pay the day school fees. In 1830 the total membership was three hundred six, and in 1832 began the forty-one year pastorate of Dr. Backus, who introduced many improvements in work, under whom all differences died out, and whose daughters are still a strong power for good in the city.

Fifteen years after the Methodists, the Baptists were organized in 1822 into a church of twenty-four women and twelve men members, by a council of delegates from nearby churches. A steady growth and prosperity characterized this congregation, a church on Centre street was finished in 1828 which was twice enlarged, and in 1834 the membership had reached two hundred

forty-two, and seven were studying for the ministry. In 1836, 1837 the whole city was so swept by a revival led by Noah Levings, the Methodist pastor, that men closed their business places to attend the meetings, the voice of prayer could everywhere be heard through windows open on the streets, and all the churches had a great ingathering; before 1838 forty-two new Baptist members resulted, but most of the later converts joined other churches as the Baptists had no pastor. A fitting climax for this period of Baptist history here is the dismissal in June, 1840, of nine men and twenty-two women to form a new church in Scotia.

In 1839, after the religious awakening of the city, the Re-formed Dutch Church membership was three hundred sixty-three, St. George's Episcopal was one hundred forty-two, the Baptist was about two hundred eighty, the Presbyterian three hundred eighty-four (a gain in the one year 1838-1839 of twenty-six by certificate and eighty-one by confession of faith), and the Methodists, who in 1816, when Schenectady was made a separate station, had only fifty-four members to show for the fifty years since Webb's preaching in 1766, had advanced by 1839, twenty-three years later, to a membership of exactly four hundred.

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY THIRD

OLD HOME NIGHT

Aside from the historical addresses, the feature of this evening was a supper and reception given by the Ladies' Aid Society to the surviving members of the church in Liberty street and to former pastors. There were forty-seven of these present. The scene of this fellowship is one which will remain among the most cherished memories of those present. This revival of old days brought one noble soul, who had been wandering "o'er crag and torrent," back to the Father's house, where he found peace again.

The following historical addresses were announced in the programme for the public service after the supper:

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CHURCH IN UNION STREET, 1826-36

GILES S. BARHYDT⁴

"The old Union street church was located near the canal and on the east side of it. It was a plain structure, without any ornament whatever, either within or in its external appearance. It stood about midway between Union and Liberty streets, where the then Utica and Schenectady, now the New York Central Railroad, runs. There was a gallery on either side of the church and extending across the rear end. The pulpit was located at the front, as was also the altar.

⁴ Mr. Barhydt was unable to be present, but from his paper, which was given to the Centennial Committee, we print those parts that have not already been reproduced in Part First of this volume.

Preaching services were held three times on Sundays, morning, afternoon, and evening. They were usually well attended, as it was then customary for the children to accompany their parents to church, except at the evening service. Their absence then, however, was fully made up by the evening attendance of the young people of the city, for then, as in later years, the Methodist Church was their gathering place, and with them also came some of the "baser sort," who gave not a little annoyance, and occasionally it was necessary to call in the police to control them.

The last year or two in the history of the old church was signalized by the coming here of a musical family from the east, and the introduction of choir singing. The study of music became the rage; old and young went into it with equal zest. The old "Buckwheat" note books were then in use, and John Newell, one of the newcomers, was the teacher and leader of the choir.

Newell was remarkable for his strange antics. He played the violin, and the instrument seemed to throw him into the most violent spasms of gesticulation. Witnesses of his performances looked for his flying apart, but happily no such catastrophe ever occurred.

The church in Liberty street was opened for service in 1836 and the preacher in charge was the Rev. Noah Levings. The building was considered one of the finest church edifices in the city, its external appearance being very different from what it is at present, a broad flight of steps occupying about one-half of the front, measuring from the centre of the structure, and leading up to the vestibule, where there stood two large pillars with Corinthian capitals.

As it is both the custom and practice of Methodists to testify, it may not be out of place, to close the foregoing brief account, for the writer to express his appreciation of the life and services of the Rev. Dr. Levings, who, as I have already said, was the first pastor in the new church. Converted under his ministrations, he became my spiritual father and guide. Under his preaching I was encouraged to practice some at least of the Christian virtues, among them that of liberality in contributing to the church's support. I can never forget the loathing he felt, and occasionally expressed on collections occasions in telling of a man who boasted of "the glorious free religion which he had enjoyed for ten years and it had only cost him eighteen pence."

During the seventy years of the writer's connection with the church, it has been his practice to enjoy its services and contribute something to its support. He would not, if he could, take back a dollar of the few thousand he has given, for he considers it the very best investment he ever made. It has paid the largest dividends—not in kind, but what is vastly better, in the solid and perennial satisfaction a good deed always yields to those who practice it."

REMINISCENCES OF MY PASTORATE OF THE
CHURCH IN LIBERTY STREET, 1858, '59REV. SAMUEL MCKEAN, D. D.⁵

The call to Schenectady was conveyed to me by Dr. John Newman and Ira Brownell, who stated that it expressed the unanimous action of the Quarterly Conference and was sanctioned by the presiding elder. Going a stranger to my three previous pastorates and confronted by disappointment in the second and third because of failure to secure the men for whom they had asked, it was a satisfaction to go to a people who wanted me. The call was emphasized by the cordiality of the reception accorded to me and my family, and by the generous treatment we received during our stay.

My predecessor, J. K. Cheesman, was possessed of a symmetrical Christian character and much amiability of spirit. Two years before he had come, as a transfer to the Conference, at the request of this church. His urbanity and fidelity had endeared him to all. When he left he reported a membership of 240, and the probationers numbered 129, as the fruits of a revival which attended the closing weeks of his pastoral term. Most of these probationers were faithful to their religious vows, and were received by me into the full fellowship of the church.

The Sunday services were morning, afternoon and evening. In the first and second, sermons were delivered; the third was for prayer, praise and exhortation. They were all largely attended, the auditorium being well filled morning and afternoon and an average of about three hundred in the evening. Dr. Laurens P. Hickok, then Vice-President of Union College, expressed to me, when he accepted an invitation to preach, his high appreciation of the congregation and his pleasure in addressing them. He said, "Your congregation is unlike any other in the city, for while in others there is a large preponderance of women, in yours the men and women are equally divided and you number among them many of the substantial people of the city." The Rev. Dr. George C. Baldwin, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Troy, exchanging pulpits with the pastor of the Baptist Church of Schenectady, utilized the Sunday afternoon—as he did not preach until evening—by attending the Methodist Church. At the close of the service he inquired, "Is this the regular congregation here?" On receiving an affirmative answer, he added, "There is not a Protestant church in Troy with one so large."

The chorus choir, led first by S. V. R. Ford and after his departure by Elisha Freeman, contributed much to the attractiveness and helpfulness of the services. They sang with the spirit and the understanding also. I miss such choirs in later years. Their return, in my opinion, would be advantageous to the cause of Christ and give inspiration to its endeavors. The faculty of the college sent me their catalogue with marks indicating the various churches the students had elected to attend, with the request that I would take under my pastoral care, those

⁵ Dr. McKean's address opened with an interesting account of the beginnings of Methodism in Schenectady which is not here given because of the ground being covered in Part First of this volume. Coming down to his own pastorate in Schenectady, Dr. McKean alluded to preaching before the Conference as a probationer in 1853, at the close of which a layman from Schenectady said to a friend, "We will call him bye-and-bye." "Five years later," Dr. McKean says, "the call came."

who had chosen the Methodist. I found that a substantial plurality had selected this church and were regularly in the congregation at both preaching services and not infrequently were they present in the evening.

In view of the large attendance of the third service, the responsibility was nearly equal to the requirement of a third sermon. The Sabbath was a strenuous day. The people had a mind to work and they were efficient helpers. After a time, I determined to utilize them more and do less myself on Sunday evening. S. A. Hull was ready for every good word and work. He could pray fervently and talk to edification. I called at his place of business and suggested to him a subject which might be discussed profitably, and said, "I want you to talk on it for ten minutes next Sunday evening." He objected, saying, "I have never tried to make a set speech and I do not think I can." I replied, "I know you can and I will depend on you." Then I found my way to the office of D. A. Atwell and called his attention to another topic, asking him if he did not think its consideration would be profitable to the congregation. He thought it would. I said, "Please give some thought to it and be prepared to speak on it for ten minutes on the coming Sunday evening." The response was a negative, he alleging that he lacked the qualifications essential to a public address. In answer to his objections, I said, "When you were a student in Jonesville Academy, I often heard you declaim and you were one of the best speakers in the institution, and now your speaking ability must be revived for the benefit of God's cause." Both of the addresses were made and the speakers acquitted themselves so well and their efforts were so acceptable, that similar services frequently followed, in which they and others participated.

An aged man, in humble life, sat at the remote corner of the gallery at the right of the pulpit. He was a good listener and he knew not as to his helpfulness to the preacher in the delivery of his sermons. When we met he would almost invariably refer to the discourses of the previous Sabbath, in such a manner as indicated both a remembrance and a comprehension of them. Calling upon his enfeebled wife, who was incapacitated for church attendance, she would also intelligently refer to them. I learned at length, that he concentrated his mental powers on the sermon, not alone for his own profit but that he might reproduce them for the benefit of his invalid wife. Learning this, the inspiration from his presence was twofold, proceeding from him immediately and from her remotely.

The poor not only had the gospel preached to them, but their temporal needs were carefully provided for. The fund for their benefit was liberally endowed through the contributions of the congregation, and at each monthly meeting of the Official Board, each beneficiary, and there were many, was considered and appropriations made as conditions required. The allowances were not given on the principle of how little can these needy ones get along with, but how much can we afford them. If he that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, then the Schenectady Methodist church of that time had a large deposit in the treasury of Heaven, and the promise that such gifts will be returned in payments to the givers, has been here repeatedly fulfilled.

The church was progressive. There was no disposition to rest on laurels already won, but instead, to comply with the

divine command, "Go forward." When there was a looking backward, it was toward ennobling views, the inspiration of which would accelerate the speed of the onward march, when it was resumed. There was an alertness in testing new methods of religious procedure, and when their utility was demonstrated, they were readily adopted, and an intelligent interest was taken in certain changes in Methodistic polity then under discussion in the church at large.

This church and our conference were worthily represented in the faculty of Union College by the Rev. John Newman, D.D. Prior to his election to the Latin professorship, he had made an enviable reputation as a professor in Troy Conference Academy. Though never a pastor, he was a preacher of no ordinary ability. He was heard gladly and with profit, not only in the Methodist pulpit, but those of other denominations also. He was ever ready to co-operate with the pastor, and his support of the various undertakings of the church was hearty and exceedingly helpful.

The venerable Dr. Eliphalet Nott, the long-time President of the College, gave expressions of cordiality on many occasions and in a variety of ways. He had reached an advanced age and was physically infirm, though there seemed little abatement intellectually. There was a long distance of years between us, yet our minds were, in many respects, responsive to each other, and in our interchange of views we had much in common. It was always a pleasure to see him and his wife drive up to my door. As his weak limbs were inadequate to the support of his body, I would hasten to assist him to alight from that low-box vehicle, built for his especial accommodation. Two chairs would be brought into requisition for him to lean upon, and thus he would be helped into the house. I seldom conversed with him at my own, or his home without receiving from him some stimulating, quickening suggestions.⁶

He was a grand old man. I had a profound veneration for him, and I cherish his memory and the courtesies which he rendered me. Goldsmith's description of the village pastor may appropriately be applied to this princely man:

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swell from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Cornelius L. Barhydt was the patriarch of the church, for his connection with it dated from the beginning. At a prayer meeting, on the evening of April 7th, 1807, twelve persons began religious lives, and he was one of the twelve. Like Abraham at Bethel, he erected an altar for his family and reverently led in their daily devotions before it. His religious precepts and godly example exerted a most benign influence on his household. The Scripture was fulfilled that declares, "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him." His devotion to the church in its formative period, and through all the years of its weakness was unfaltering. He lived to see it emerge from the clouds that had overshadowed it. He beheld it arise, shine, for its light had come and the glory of the Lord had risen upon it.

⁶ See p. 25, note.

The hoary heads of James Reagles,⁷ Edward Clark and George Fowler were crowns of glory, for they were found in the way of righteousness, and a long time had they been in it. Lewis C. Barhydt was a worthy son of a noble sire. Suddenly and accidentally did that strong man fall at last. Then the pillar from the earthly was transferred to the heavenly temple. William H. Beal was like Joseph of Arimathea, a "good man and a just." The church occupied a large place in his heart. He participated somewhat in public and political affairs, being for a time postmaster, but never deviated from the path of rectitude.

Clute and Teller represented a business firm which commanded the confidence of their patrons and the general public. William H. Clute was of modest mien and of few words, but when he spoke it was to the point. The mind of Levi W. Teller was much above the average, and his utterances were weighted with valuable suggestions. Ira Brownell was the embodiment of cheerfulness and gladness. Rays of sunshine from his personality were scattered everywhere around him.

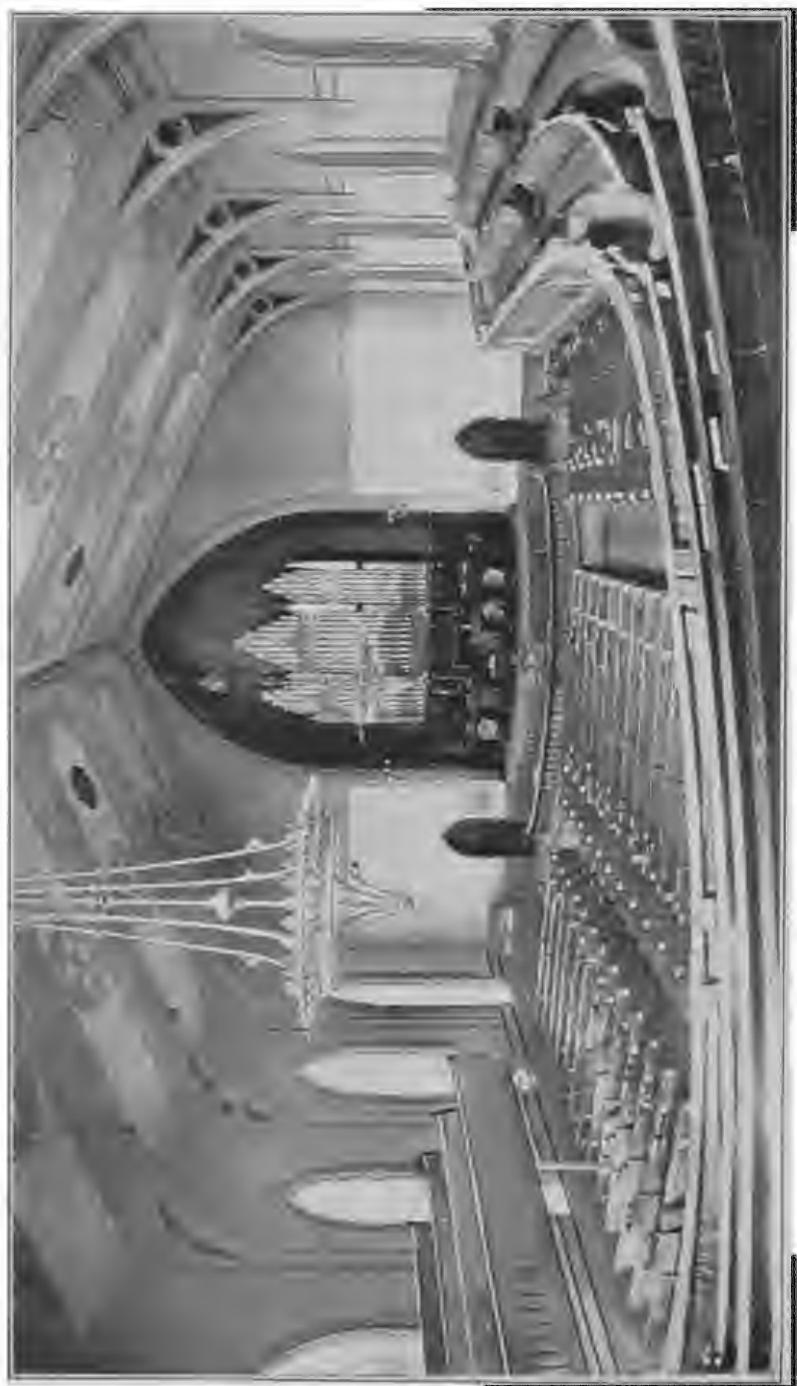
James Pickett, who for many years cared for the college grounds, kept also his own soul's garden, fruitful and fragrant with the plants and flowers of righteousness. The name of T. B. Penney did not indicate his moral worth, for it was golden. Stephen A. Daggett had been, in previous years, at the front in active leadership, but in consequence of old age, he was watching the hosts of Israel, as they were led forward by younger men.

Peter Van Dyck, Levi Case, Lewis Allen, M. B. Vedder, George G. Gillespie, A. U. Bannard, J. R. Freeman, Andrew Schermerhorn and John P. Beckley were as trees planted by the river of waters, each bringing forth fruit in his season. And now the interesting figure of Christopher Beekman comes in review before me. Like Matthew, he once sat at the receipt of custom, but the customs he received were tolls for crossing the old bridge which spanned the Mohawk river.⁸

⁷ A grandson of James Reagles, in a communication to the Centennial Committee, thus speaks of him: "One of the most vivid pictures in my memory is that of a noble grandsire seated in his arm chair at the head of the table near the warm stove, reading aloud, yet as to himself, page after page of Hebrew history and psalm, and proverb, and prophecy, and gospel, until he fell asleep over the book, and awaking refreshed, continued the reading, and when I had been left alone at my studies, I could hear his voice with its warm human notes pleading with God in prayer from where he knelt in the adjoining bed-chamber. He never, that I can remember, spoke to me formally about his faith, but his life was speaking to me, speaking volumes, then, all the time, and has spoken ever since in tones that never can be hushed."

⁸ Of this Christopher Beekman, better known to the Schenectadians of his day, as "Uncle Stoeffel," we read the following account in Yates' "History of Schenectady County," pp. 146-47: "The friend and father was he of the Delta Phi's of Old Union,—after them the *pater familias* to every undergraduate." Uncle Stoeffel knew many great men in their youth, and many of the renowned of the land came to see him at commencement time. He was a quaint old German with laughable lapses of English and with a remarkably well-educated cat as his inseparable companion.

"When the wayward undergraduate emerged from a 'skate' with a swelled head and leaden stomach and a copperas palate and could not get relief, he would stagger down to the old toll-house for the cure that Uncle Stoeffel was ready to give at any hour of the day or night. Uncle was a devout Methodist according to his light. He would stand the victim of the youthful jag in the center of the floor, clad in the 'altogether' and give him a tremendous bath on the clean boards, stuffing him with sour condiments of his own concoction, accompanied with religious admonition throughout, a strange mixture of piety and pickles, of pails of water with the Pentateuch and the Psalms of David."



Interior of Church in State Street, 1907
From photograph taken after the Centennial Dedication, showing the Cande Memorial Tablet to Richard and Mary Clute
On the right of the organ and the Barbyrd Historical Tablet on the left

There were twenty-five members of the Official Board when I took my leave in 1860. Two only, Giles S. Barhydt and Joseph B. Graham, continue to the present time and participate in these centennial festivities. Long and valuable have been their services to the church. May Divine benedictions continue to attend them, and, at the end of their earthly careers, may the Saviour's "Well done," greet them.

I have been pastor of many charges, but in none did social life and the claims of hospitality receive a superior recognition to this. Receptions were multifarious. The dwellings of the members were converted into banqueting houses. Jesus was always invited, and his presence was recognized by prayer and praise. They who made the feast combined the qualities of the two sisters of Bethany: they served the guests and they also sat at the feet of Jesus.

THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH IN STATE STREET, 1870-74

HON. JOSEPH B. GRAHAM

Superintendent of the Building of the Church, and, since 1874,
President of the Board of Trustees

During the administrations of Samuel McKean, Henry L. Starks and Joseph K. Cheesman, 1858 to 1863, there was a growing conviction that the Liberty Street church was inadequate for our needs. Its nearness to the railroad was annoying at times. The construction was such as to make it laborious for old people to enter the auditorium. A conviction was growing that something must be done soon or our position among the churches of the city would suffer.

At a meeting held pursuant to a call of the pastor, Rev. A. J. Jutkins, in the lecture room of the church, on Monday evening, February 20, 1865, the pastor proceeded, at some length, to state the object of the meeting to be to take measures for raising "a fund to be expended, as may hereafter be directed by the Society, either in remodeling and expanding our present church edifice or erecting a new one on another site."

At the annual meeting held March 20th, 1866, the treasurer, Giles S. Barhydt, made his first report, the total amount raised during the year being \$2,425.92, which was ordered to be invested in Government 7 per cent. bonds. In November of the same year, a church fair was held in Anthony Hall which turned into the treasury the sum of \$2,035.00. On the 4th day of December following, the Trustees purchased a site for a new church on the west corner of Union and Lafayette streets, where the German Methodist Episcopal Church now stands.

In the month of February, 1868, to the great surprise of the membership, notwithstanding being warned of the danger of splitting the church, the Trustees purchased another site on the easterly corner of State and Lafayette streets for the sum of \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars). This purchase consisted of the following properties: A strip ten feet wide sold to the city for the widening of Lafayette street from State street to Chapel; the grounds now occupied by the church and parsonage; and also the grounds occupied by Nos. 609 and 611 State street, together with the grounds occupied by Nos. 610, 612 and 614 Chapel

street, said several parcels being afterwards sold for the sum of \$5,900 (five thousand, nine hundred dollars), making the cost of the grounds now occupied by the church and parsonage, \$4,100. In the estimation of real estate experts a conservative value to-day is \$200,000 (two hundred thousand dollars).

In the month of April of the same year, a mass meeting of the church was called to decide which site should be chosen. The church was literally packed, the women being as numerous and as deeply interested as the men. The meeting was called to order and prayer offered by the pastor. Brother Peter Van Dyck, president of the Board of Trustees, stated the object of the meeting to be to determine which site to build upon. No sooner had he taken his seat than up jumped a State street man and stated that he would give \$2,000 for the erection of a church on the State street site, but not one dollar for the Union street site. No sooner had he taken his seat than a Union street man stated that there should be a church on the Union street site if he had to build it himself and hire a minister to do the preaching. Another Union street man followed, showing the decided advantages of Union street over State street. State street again got the floor, giving a long, but not strong, argument in its favor. Matters began to look decidedly serious. Peter Van Dyck, a master of the art of getting around a corner without knocking it off, looked troubled. Silence at last settled upon the anxious throng, when a young man sitting in the back part of the church offered the following resolution, namely:

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to secure pledges to the amount of \$30,000 for the erection of a new church edifice and that each subscriber express his or her preference of sites and that the site receiving the largest amount in pledges shall be chosen.

The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the young man got for his temerity the task of making the canvass which took four months to complete.

The amount of pledges was \$30,321.00. Plans were secured from three architects. Those of Mr. Cummings, of Troy, were chosen.

On the 1st of September, 1870, the contract to build the foundation was let to Michael Nolan, the lowest bidder. As the foundation was nearing completion, a Methodist preacher from a neighboring city walked around it and inquired of the superintendent what corner of the thing it was proposed to worship in when completed. If any mistake was made in its construction it is that it was not made ten or twelve feet wider, thus lengthening the chapel ten feet, as well as enlarging the seating capacity of the auditorium.

In June, 1871, the corner stone was laid by Rev. Samuel Meredith, D.D., Presiding Elder of the Albany District. The contract of enclosing the building was let to a Mr. Van Kleek, of Syracuse, who erected the Saratoga Methodist Episcopal Church at the same time. A large number of men were employed and by September 1st, the brick work of the entire structure was completed. Early in September began the work of lifting to their places on the walls the seven great trusses, weighing about seven tons each, which carry the roof of the main building. Four of them, beginning at the northerly end of the

auditorium had been successfully put in position and the fifth one was being, with difficulty, raised to its place, owing to the heavy west wind, when suddenly the hoisting rope snapped and the seven-ton truss came crashing down, one man, Lawyer McChesney, of this city, being instantly killed, and another, one of the workmen from Syracuse, was so badly injured that he died some two months later.

By Christmas the entire building, including the spire, was under roof and the windows and doors boarded up. In the spring of 1872 the work of completing the chapel building was begun, and also the laying out of grounds and forming terraces. In November, when all was finished, excepting the seating of the Sunday school room, a church fair was held, the proceeds from which were about \$2,500. In December following, we moved from the Liberty Street church into the chapel of the new building, and in the following February we sold the Liberty street property to St. John's Catholic Church for \$10,000.

The next move in our building operations, was to scaffold the auditorium so that beams and brackets might be put in place and the ceiling plastered. Brother Lewis Brewer spent nearly two weeks hauling tamarack poles from a swamp in New Scotland, in the westerly portion of Albany county. He refused any compensation for his cold and laborious job. It was done in the month of February.

When the scaffolding was up the work of putting in the beams and brackets so essential to the acoustics of an auditorium, was begun and followed, in the spring, by the plastering, on the completion of which the scaffolding was taken down, the organ put in position and the finishing of the church pushed forward vigorously. The interior work was done under the supervision of Mr. Thomas Davis, now living, 90 years of age. The seats, built outside, were quickly put in place; the carpets and cushions followed, and at last, the long-looked-day of dedication was upon us—a day never to be forgotten by those taking an active interest in it. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. Ira G. Bidwell, of Syracuse, and the securing of pledges for the payment of the indebtedness upon the property was turned over into the hands of that "apostle of hard cash," Rev. B. I. Ives.

CENTENNIAL SUNDAY, MAY FIFTH

The two Sundays, May 5th and 12th, were the jubilee days of the celebration. Sunday, May 5th, began in a unique manner, at 9:30 A. M., by the unveiling of a historical tablet, placed on the outside of the church, to the left of the front center doors, and donated by the Captain Thomas Webb Club.⁹ The tablet was presented by Dr. Kitchin, chairman of the Centennial Committee, and unveiled by Dr. Walter S. Goddard, the first president of the club. The pastor received the tablet on behalf of the church, offering the following prayer:

"Almighty God, who hath called us out of darkness into thy marvellous light, mercifully accept our service and receive at

⁹ See Appendix, p. 145, "Thomas Webb, Not a Captain."

our hands this historical tablet which we offer and dedicate as a gift from 'the sons in commemoration of the fathers,' and of this thy church which we receive as a heritage from them, and in honor of Him the brightness of thy glory, the great head of the Church, who with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen."

Two other tablets were presented at the morning service at 10:30. These are at either side of the pulpit rostrum. The one at the right was the gift of Mrs. W. W. Condé, of Watertown, in memory of her grandparents, Richard Clute and his wife, Mary McMichael. The one at the left was a thank-offering from the four children of Mr. Giles S. Barhydt, and contains the names of all the pastors who have served the church during its first hundred years.¹⁰ Dr. Kitchin, chairman of the Centennial Committee, presented the tablets, giving a brief explanation of their significance. The Condé tablet was unveiled by Mrs. W. W. Condé and her son Harold; the Barhydt tablet by Mrs. Katherine B. Snell and Mr. T. Low Barhydt, daughter and son of Mr. Giles S. Barhydt. In behalf of the church Hon. J. B. Graham, president of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor received the tablets. The pastor made the following prayer:

"O thou, who by the mouth of thy servant David, hast said that thy word is perfect, converting the soul, receive we beseech thee at our hands these historical tablets, and grant thy blessing upon the donors. And as these tablets stand here in memory of those who have proved faithful stewards of thine, and of those pastors who have proclaimed thy word in this city for a hundred years, so may thy preached word in this church continue to fall as the rain and distill as the dew, and thy children who hear it be made fruitful in good works, to thy honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Preceding the presentation was a Love Feast conducted by Dr. W. H. Hughes, of Mechanicville, pastor of this church 1880-83 and again 1886-88. In the altar with him were other former pastors. The meeting was rich in Christian song, testimony and prayer.

The Lord's Supper was administered at 10:30, under the direction of Rev. I. D. Van Valkenburg, Presiding Elder of the Albany District. He was assisted by Dr. W. H. Hughes, Dr. J. W. Eaton, Dr. J. E. Adams, and the pastors of the church.

Never before was such a holy enthusiasm at the Lord's Supper witnessed in this church. With an eagerness which was without loss to dignity the throngs made their way to the table of the Lord, standing in large numbers again and again, awaiting the dismissal of a table, which would allow them opportunity to

¹⁰ The subject matter of the inscription for the three tablets was prepared by the chairman of the Centennial Committee. For further action in regard to these tablets, see pp. 143, 144.



Barhydt Tablet
See pp 10



Centennial Tablets
Condé Tablet
See pp 120



Captain Thomas Webb Club Tablet
See pp 67

kneel and partake of "His body and blood." The word "Eucharist," which was very early applied to the Lord's Supper means thanksgiving, and was regarded by the primitive church as the very highest form of thanksgiving. "Sadness cannot eat." This occasion was a "Eucharist" indeed—a genuine thanksgiving joy. And what further heightened the interest was the joining in communion of a large number of new members to the fellowship of the church. It had been the pastor's wish that one hundred new members might be added on this day, making a new member for each of the one hundred years of the church's history. To this end, for over a month effort had been put forth. When the invitation was given for those who desired to join the church to come to the altar, they came until they stood three deep to the number of 137. Forty-three were received on probation, forty-three on confession of faith from probation, and fifty-one by letter. Preceding this reception occurred the baptism, by the pastor, of thirteen adults.

In the evening Dr. John E. Adams, Presiding Elder from the New York East Conference, preached an inspiring sermon on "The Pearl of Great Price." Dr. Adams' presence was made interesting from the fact that he was the presiding elder who, five years before, had conducted the negotiations effecting the transfer of the present pastor from New Haven, Conn., to this church and the pastor who was then here—Rev. Francis T. Brown,—to Middletown, Conn.

MONDAY EVENING, MAY SIXTH UNIVERSAL METHODISM NIGHT

The programme for this evening appropriately opened with a discriminating address on "John Wesley," by J. Wesley Johnston, D. D., pastor of "Old John Street Church," New York, the oldest Methodist Church in America: Dean B. H. Ripton presided.

TUESDAY EVENING, MAY SEVENTH AMERICAN METHODISM NIGHT

The address this evening was on "Francis Asbury," and was given by Professor Ezra Squier Tipple, D. D., of Drew Theological Seminary. Dr. Kitchin presided.

Following the address a reception was given by the members of the Official Board and their wives, to the members of the Official Boards and their wives of the Albany Street, Broadway, Grace, Union Street, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Churches, the children of the First Church; and the German Methodist Church. Dr. Tipple spoke on the possibilities of "A Social and Evan-

gelization Union" and, as a result of this reception, a Schenectady Social Union was organized and later the following officers were elected: President, W. C. Kitchin, Ph.D., First Church; First Vice-President, C. W. Marcy, Broadway Church; Second Vice-President, F. C. Zapf, Trinity Church; Third Vice-President, E. Brister, Union Street Church; Fourth Vice-President, W. Myers, Stanford Chapel; Recording Secretary, H. A. Dolley, Albany Street Church; Corresponding and Financial Secretary, Rev. T. M. Bishop, Grace Church; Treasurer, C. E. Ulrich, German Church.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY EIGHTH

SUNDAY SCHOOL NIGHT

The address was on "The Christian Life as a Higher Education," by Rev. Geo. Wood Anderson, pastor of the State Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Troy. Rev. Geo. E. Mayer, associate pastor and superintendent of the Sunday school, presided.

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY NINTH

MISSIONARY NIGHT

Address on "The New Eastern Question," by Rev. Homer C. Stuntz, D.D., formerly Superintendent of the Methodist Mission, Philippine Islands. County Judge A. M. Vedder presided. This was Dr. Stuntz' fourth visit within a year and he was given a royal welcome.

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY TENTH

YOUNG PEOPLE'S NIGHT

Address on "The Wider Outlook of Church Life," by Bishop J. H. Vincent, D.D., LL.D., of Indianapolis, Ind. The pastor presided.

FRATERNAL MEETING

Saturday afternoon a unique fellowship took place. It was a Chautauqua Vesper and Fraternal Service, held at 3 o'clock. A. V. V. Raymond, D.D., LL.D., President of Union College, presided. On the platform with the pastors, Bishop Vincent and President Raymond, were the ministers of the three churches which were in existence in Schenectady a hundred years ago, and who for this reason, had been asked to respond with fraternal greetings. They were the Rev. J. Russell Stevenson, D.D., pastor, First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. B. W. R. Tayler, D.D., Rector, St. George's Episcopal Church, and the Rev. Geo. R. Lunn, D.D., pastor, First Reformed Church.



Centennial Speakers

1. Bishop John H. Vincent; 2. Rev. J. Wesley Johnston; 3. Professor Ezra Squier Tipple; 4. Rev. John E. Adams; 5. Presiding Elder Irving D. Van Valkenburg; 6. Rev. Homer C. Stuntz; 7. Rev. George Wood Anderson

President Raymond expressed his pleasure at having a part in these services. He spoke of the name "Union College" being given to express its particular aim, which was Christian, but in no sense sectarian. He alluded to the large influence of Methodism on its faculty and spoke in the highest appreciation of Prof. John Newman and Prof. William Wells, and then said that he knew a large part of the strength of the college would be lost to-day without Dean Ripton and Prof. Landreth.

Dr. Stevenson, of the First Presbyterian Church, said: "I feel that the intellectual life, that the moral life, that the social life, that the spiritual life of Schenectady and of the churches of Jesus Christ in Schenectady, has been immeasurably enriched and enlarged and deepened by having introduced one hundred years ago one more variety of the various forms of Christian activity: I feel that Presbyterianism is better because balanced by Episcopacy and by Methodism and by many other branches of the one church of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Tayler, of St. George's Episcopal Church, said: "The world to-day is richer in its spiritual force, in its spiritual perceptions, in its spiritual condition and in its spiritual aspirations, because of Methodism and because of the glorious life within him who was its founder and its great original leader. I bring earnest, hearty and cordial greetings and affectionate thoughts from the old historic parish of Saint George. Out of a heart that is full of love for all Christian brethren who believe in the Lord Jesus, because that is the central crucial point of all our common Christian religion, I say, God bless the work of this church in a town where work is much needed, and if the aggressiveness of your pastor and leader continue as it has done, you may be sure that you will lay up for yourselves, as he is laying up for himself, a great harvest of souls against the day when we shall all stand before our blessed Lord in the judgment."

Dr. Lunn, of the First Reformed Church, said: "It is a peculiar pleasure for me to bring to your church the fraternal greetings of our denomination. It is especially a pleasure because, if the other brethren will not take offense at what I have to say, of all the local churches, next to my own, I love this church the best. Here were those scenes never to be forgotten in which there was indeed the truest fellowship of all the churches in this city."¹¹ I am sure we are to be congratulated, we

¹¹ Reference to January, 1905, when the widely-famed "Schenectady Revival" meetings were held in this church, under the direction of the Schenectady Ministerial Association, Dr. Lunn preaching each evening during the campaign and Dr. Adams conducting the after services. Also, in November of the same year, Rev. W. J. Dawson, D.D., of London, Eng., conducted a mission in this church under the same auspices. See pp. 98, 99.

members of the smaller churches, that we have this privilege of coming here and extending to you our heartiest congratulations, not only to your denomination, but to your particular church, that during these one hundred years you have stood firm for that fundamental principle for which John Wesley labored all those long years without weariness, with a devotion unparalleled,—the principle that a man ought to know whom he has believed, and knowing whom he has believed he ought to confess Him King of his life. I believe Methodism has done more for America in keeping ritual where it ought to be and developing the experimental part of the religious life, than all the other denominations combined. To your church here in this city, doing a magnificent work, and to your pastor, beloved by us all, because of his sterling worth, I bring most cordial greetings of the 'Old First Dutch Church,' and her daughter churches which are numerous in this vicinity."

Bishop John Heyl Vincent, D.D., LL.D., Chancellor of the Chautauqua Institution, followed with a brilliant extempore address on Christian Unity. He said in conclusion: "I am very glad to have had the pleasure of hearing these inspiring addresses, so full of cordiality and catholicity, and I congratulate this old church and the mission it has fulfilled, and these other churches that have been this afternoon so ably represented."

SUNDAY, MAY TWELFTH

The *Evening Star* spoke in the following words of the last day of the celebration:

"The centennial exercises just closing have served to punctuate the importance of the work which the church is doing in this community. Yesterday at both services upwards of a thousand worshipers sought admission and were inspired with the worshipful surroundings. The address of Bishop Vincent in the morning was one of the most uplifting addresses ever uttered in this community. The bishop has been throughout his life a student of means by which the conditions surrounding the people can be bettered. His life work has resulted in a fullness of attainment seldom reached by any man and as an ennobler of character he stands among the most eminent men of all time."

In presenting Bishop Vincent the pastor said:

"One hundred years ago, at the session of the New York Conference, held at Coeymans, Bishop Asbury gave official recognition to the Methodist Episcopal church in Schenectady, and arranged for its pastoral care. Methodism has had no more worthy successor to our "St. Francis" on the Board of Bishops, than our "St. John," who will now speak to us."

Bishop Vincent's sermon was on "The Church and the Neighbor," and his text "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Beginning with the announcement that he did not believe in

foreign missions, Bishop Vincent caused something akin to surprise in his audience. This was later explained, however, by his statement that he considered nothing foreign on this planet. "They are all our neighbors," he said. Then in taking up his theme he spoke of our neighbors in the order in which they come. "The real mission of the church," he said, "is to induce every individual to find out his neighbor's need and ascertain how he may best serve him."

A baptism of infants by the pastor preceded the sermon.¹²

At 6:30 Bishop Vincent spoke to a union meeting of the probationers, Epworth League and class meetings of the church, outlining his new plan of training probationers through the "Continuous Church Candidates Club." The pastor announced that this would be the first church to put in operation the Bishop's plan.

THE CENTENNIAL SERMON

At the evening worship the pastor preached the Centennial sermon, taking as a subject, "Straight Forward," and as a text the word of the Lord to Moses, "Speak thou unto the children of Israel that they go forward." (Exodus 14:15.)

An outline of the sermon follows:

When Freeborn Garrettson, one of the founders of American Methodism, and the presiding elder of the first Schenectady circuit, lay dying in New York,¹³ he said to Noah Levings, who later became pastor of this church, and who was then at his bedside, "Keep straight forward: Keep straight forward." Levings replied, "You must feel at this time like Simeon of old, having lived to see the salvation of God these fifty years in the rise and progress of Methodism in these United States. But I fear lest the sons of the Gospel suffer the work to decline from its original simplicity and power." Like a flash the dying Garrettson retorted, "You will stand and do better than we have done."

When we look back upon the heroism of those who planted this church in Schenectady, when we look into the faces before us of those whose hair and beards are white, and recall how their sacrifice has made the prosperity of to-day possible, we may well fear our unworthiness to wear their robes, walk in their steps and enter into their labors. But I know they have faith that we shall stand. And so personifying the first century of our church history as an old man, and this second century upon which we are now entering as a young man, I see the hoary-bearded father handing his crown to the son, and I hear him say, "You will stand and do better than we have done," and then as a holy triumph kindles his eye, I see him extend his hands in final benediction, twice repeated, "Keep straight forward: Keep straight forward." This benediction is our heritage from the fathers; this benediction is our endowment for the years which are before us.

¹² On this occasion Bishop Vincent baptized his namesake, Vincent Taft Adams, the eight-months' old son of Dr. and Mrs. Adams.

¹³ September 26th, 1827.

Looking back we may, to-night, hear the voice of the past saying to us out of its one hundred years of triumph, "Keep straight forward." Straight in the simplicity and purity of the faith "once delivered unto the saints," but forward, adapting this faith by a new emphasis and a new interpretation to meet the new conditions of the new age, as did our fathers before, to the age in which they lived.

There are three things that come to us to-night from the past. The first century of our church life calls to us out of its history and says, "Go forward, a church with a mission." We might put this supreme mission of the church as the building of character on the foundation of Jesus Christ, for the ushering in of the Kingdom of Heaven here and now.

The first century calls to us out of its history to-night and says, "Go forward, a church with a message." The message grows out of the mission. The message is the burning word which the mission makes possible.

Our first century calls to us out of its past and says, "Go forward, a church with a programme." You cannot do much in the age in which we live, without a programme. It must be a great programme, a programme for the whole world, for the discipling of all nations, for the meeting of all sorts and conditions of human life, for all colors and all races,—a great vast missionary programme. This programme does not single out fifty-two sacred days in a year, but three hundred and sixty-five sacred days; not occasional, special, and spasmodic days of activity, but three hundred sixty-five continuous days for the work of the church; not a great rallying once a year, a presentation of missions and a splendid missionary collection, but three hundred sixty-five days of prayer and toil and labor and giving for missions.

Members of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, is our church with its splendid opportunity, its historic past, the uplifting force that it ought to be? It has been a force through the century it has lived up to to-night. It was a strong force in this city in early days; the great revival under Noah Levings started the other churches here into new life and action, so that they gained as much or more than the Methodists themselves. It has always been an intellectual force. It has had in its pulpit men of wide thought, of inspiration, of character, and of spiritual power. It has allied itself to learning from the day when Freeborn Garrison made Union College his retreat and he and President Nott became intimate friends. Other pastors have been famous in the denomination as preachers, educators, editors, missionary leaders, and evangelists. Of the nine living former pastors, two are honored members of other Conferences, five are superannuated, all of whom served in the presiding eldership; one is now presiding elder of the Plattsburg District, and one, my immediate predecessor, Rev Francis T. Brown, is the brilliant pastor of the First Church, New Haven, Connecticut. Thus, our church has touched the larger life, which has helped to make Methodism a force.

But we stand here to-night and look at the flood which has been sweeping into our city in the last six years, which mark the beginning of the twentieth century; that tide of increasing population, of increasing business and industry. Twelve people, one hundred years ago, were converted at a prayer meeting in Green

street and these, with a few others, were incorporated into a Methodist Church. In thirty-three years, 1840, this little band had become four hundred, and that was a larger membership than any other church had in the city. Within the last five years, we have seen in this city five new Methodist churches, either organized, or with houses of worship dedicated. And, in spite of that, this old First Church has continued to hold her own and grow in these years from one thousand members to fourteen hundred, and increase her benevolent budget from \$1,700 to \$4,000. Here we stand to-night with opportunity before us, and we ask ourselves, are we worthy to wear the mantle, to follow the steps, and enter into the labors of those who have left us? We ask, shall we be true to the responsibilities that God and the people place upon us? We see there are breakers ahead. There are difficulties besetting us. We need money for new equipment, for new buildings, for endowment. We need enthusiasm for work among the foreigners at our doors, we need the consecration of talent for spiritual labor. Shall we be equal to the emergency? The message that Moses received when he sent twelve valiant men to spy out the land, was, "the land is flowing with milk and honey but the enemy are too great. We cannot conquer. We better not try." Two, the youngest men of the group, said, "let us go up and possess the land," and the people answered, "they are too young: they are filled with the wild ardor of youth." The majority report was adopted, and the chosen people remained nearly forty years longer in the wilderness, but a day came when a new generation under one of those minority men, Joshua, went up and possessed the land.

There was a painting that some of you may have seen at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, of a Norwegian exploring party, out on the ice fields. In the foreground was a broken sled, a few half-starved dogs, and a little group of men, their clothing, attitude, and expression telling the story of suffering, misery, and despair. In the background, almost unobserved, rolled the open sea, the object of all their suffering, toil, and fortitude, while on a promontory stood the form of a heroic leader, with decision marking every feature. Pointing to the gleaming waters, and looking at the little discouraged band, he seemed to be saying, "No retreat;—Straight forward." When this church in its days of peril was facing defeat, there was one—and he still lives with us—who stood before the discouraged congregation like the heroic figure of that Norwegian painting, and cried, "No retreat." With the difficulties before us to-day, who will stand on the promontory of leadership and cry, "There are the gleaming waters of opportunity: Straight forward!" Rather shall we not all imbibe this spirit, and put our life into the church until it stands here personified into such a heroic figure, amid the noise and din of the city's teeming life, and proclaims to all about the slogan of victory, "Keep straight forward."

At the conclusion of the sermon Dr. W C. Kitchin, chairman of the Centennial Committee, presented the following resolution of thanks which the congregation adopted by a rising vote:

"We, the members of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Schenectady, N. Y., assembled in the closing service of our Centennial Celebration on this Sunday evening, the 12th day of May, 1907, hereby express our thanks to Mrs. W. W. Condé, of Water-

town, N. Y., for the beautiful tablet which she has presented to this church as a centennial memorial of her grandparents, Richard and Mary Clute, in whose home, on Green street, this church had its origin one hundred years ago;

"And to Mr. Frank Barhydt of Kansas City, Mo., Mr. T. Low Barhydt, of this city, Mrs. Bessie Schermerhorn, of Newburgh, N. Y., and Mrs. Katherine B. Snell, of this city, for the splendid historical tablet which they have given as a thank-offering for the continuously active connection which their father, our well-beloved brother, Mr. Giles S. Barhydt, has sustained to this church for a period of more than three score and ten years.

"Recognizing the high historic value of these two gifts, coming, in both instances, from descendants of founders of our church, we believe that we may confidently assure the donors that these memorials that they have erected will be counted among this church's priceless possessions through all the coming years; and that to them and to that other historical tablet outside, by the door, the gift of the Men's Club of this church, will come generation after generation of those who will worship God in this First Methodist Episcopal Church, and, standing before these inscriptions, written in imperishable bronze, will, because of the gracious generosity of these friends and donors, be enabled to learn the essential facts in the historical development of our church, down to the present time."

The celebration had come to its closing moments. Twelve evenings before, it had begun by the singing of a centennial hymn, written for the occasion; and now the congregation, after the rising vote on the above resolution of thanks, remained standing and again sang the same words, the benediction was spoken, the voice of the organ rose in the postlude, and our one hundredth anniversary exercises were at an end.

CENTENNIAL HYMN

By W. C. KITCHIN, Ph.D.

Tune, St. Catherine.—("Faith of Our Fathers.")

Church of our fathers, church they loved,
Dear object of their toil and tears,
With grateful hearts, we meet to-day
To celebrate thy hundred years,
And thank the God our fathers sought
For all the work His grace hath wrought.

Church of our fathers, mighty yet
In Jesus' name and power to bless;
Here sinners still a Saviour find,
And saints a fuller righteousness.
O church of ours, the pledge we give
For thee to labor, pray and live.

Church of our fathers, church they loved,
Dear church we joy to call our own,
Thy future holdeth better things
Than all thy storied past hath known;
God who hath brought thee to this day
Through centuries more shall guide thy way.

APPENDIX

I

Showing that Thomas Webb was not a Captain, but only a Lieutenant, in His Britannic Majesty's 48th Regiment of Foot.

Early Methodist writers, including authorities no less great than John Wesley and Bishop Asbury, speak of Thomas Webb as "Captain Webb," and their example has been followed by historians of Methodism to the present day. As a matter of fact, he never held a higher rank than that of lieutenant, and how the fiction that made him "captain" arose among his intimate acquaintances, in his own lifetime, it is now impossible to discover. The perpetuation of the mistake is no less surprising, as ample means for its discovery and correction have always been within reach. Those interested in the subject are referred to the "List of the General and Field Officers as they rank in Army at Home and Abroad," published annually by the Secretary of War. The volumes covering the years 1754-1766 inclusive, contain Webb's name. He first appears as quartermaster of the 48th Regiment of Foot, to which position he was promoted from the ranks Oct. 29th, 1754. On November 9th, 1755, he received commission as lieutenant in the same regiment. In 1766, his name leads the list of lieutenants of the 48th, indicating that he was then the senior officer of that rank. This is the last year that his name appears in the "Army Lists," and the only possible inference is that he withdrew that year permanently from the service. Perhaps his conversion, under the preaching of John Wesley, in 1765, and his own intense interest and activity in religious work were the governing motives that led him to abandon military life. In addition to the official "Army Lists," cited above, see also, W. C. Ford's "British Officers Serving in America, 1754-1774." Boston, 1894.

Webb returned to England and died there December 20th, 1796. Among the friends of his old age, he seems to have been known by no higher title than lieutenant. In the "Memoirs of Rev. Thomas Cooper written by Himself," published in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1835, in relating his experience during the year 1781, the writer says: "In Bath, I was received with the greatest kindness by Lieutenant Webb, whose house I made my home during my stay there. He was made very useful in preaching a full and free salvation, for the people collected in great numbers from every adjacent quarter to hear an officer in his regiments offer salvation to returning sinners."

The writer believes that he is the first to discover testimony from Lieutenant Webb himself relative to the rank he held in the army. In the "Sir William Johnson Manuscripts," in the Manuscript Department of the State Library, at Albany, he found an autograph letter of Webb, written to Sir William Johnson, the year following the date assigned to his preaching in Schenectady. A copy of this interesting document is here

given in the exact spelling, capitalization and punctuation of the original:

Dear Sir

The inclosed I received from Capt. Edmeston of the 48th Regt. he acquaints me it is a recommendatory Letter to you beging your friendship to assist him Locating some Land in this Province, I have had the Letter by me some Time but have never been favored with an opportunity to present it in Person, I received two Mandamuses for 5000 Acres Each the one for him self the other in behalf of his Brother, some Time after the receipt of them, I made application for one of the Townships formerly in New hampshire government, understanding they were to be granted by the Governor and Council of this Province, but am informed that since this Resolution a Stop has been put to it in consequence of some orders Received from home, therefore I take the Liberty sir to beg youl Interest yourself in favour of Capt. Edmeston as I am informed there is a Tract of land now under Consideration on the Delaware to be purchased of the Indians, if you would be so good as to include Capt. Edmeston and his Brother for the 10,000 Acres agreeable to the Mandamuses it would be serving them in a particular manner, I dont mean to take any advantage of the Mandamuses but only to include them in the purchase for that Quantity of Land, and I will pay the mony for the same please God and acknowledge the favour don to Capt. Edmeston my friend, and if I might find Favour with you Sire I shall Esteem it a particular favour if you would include me in the purchase for five Thousand Acres for self son and friends, however if this cannot be Don I shall readily give up my own Interest for Capt. Edmeston, youl excuse me Sire taking this Liberty not bein personally acquainted with you, but as I thought my Services Entitled me to some Land should have been glad of your interest in this same purchase, I am with great Respect

Dear Sire

Your Most Obt. Huble
Svt.

Octr. 17th: 1767

T. Webb

If you Favour me with a Line please to direct for Lt. Webb
New York

In an answer to the above communication, dated at Johnson Hall, Nov. 5th, 1767, Sir William expresses his regret that the unsettled condition of Indian affairs renders it impossible for him to assist Lieutenant Webb's friend, and the letter concludes thus, there being no signature:

"When the present disagreeable aspect of Indian affairs is removed I shall do any thing in my power for your service and Captain Edmeston's as I am Sir

Your hearty well wisher
and very humble servant

Lieut. Webb.

The inscription of the present name of the men's club of our church on their centennial tablet will serve to perpetuate among us, locally, the harmless fiction of the *captaincy* of Thomas Webb. So long, indeed, has the error been associated with his name

that many believe with Bishop Hurst that "‘Captain Webb’ he will always be, whatever the roster may rank him." (Hurst’s "History of Methodism," Vol. IV, p. 12.) Others who prefer fact to fiction and maintain that it is never too late to correct a mistake, will in the interests of historical truth, allow the title of "captain" to fall into "innocuous desuetude." Surely the hero who fought by the side of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, was all but slain because of bravery at the siege of Louisburg, became closely associated with John Wesley and his work in England, and played so prominent a part in the planting of Methodism in America, is rich enough in rank and honor and is sufficiently secure of lasting remembrance without the doubtful assistance of a title he never possessed. Thomas Webb was not a captain in the army of His Britannic Majesty, but, among the conquering hosts of the great Captain of our salvation, he was, as Bishop Simpson termed him, "The first apostle of Methodism in America."

W. C. KITCHIN

II

*Giving the Record of the First Incorporation of this Church
in the Clerk's Office of the City and County of Albany on the
6th Day of September, 1808.*

"Be it known that in pursuance of the Statute in such case made and provided, on the twenty-fifth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eight the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady met at their usual place of meeting for divine worship in said city, pursuant to publick notice given to the members of said church by Seth Crowell, minister of said church of the time and place of such meeting, and a notification thereof for two successive Sabbaths previous to the said meeting at the place before mentioned by the minister aforesaid that a majority of the members of said church then and there attending nominated Mordecai Aikin and Darcy Joyce to preside at said meeting to receive the votes of the electors for trustees of the said church and to judge of the qualifications of such electors that the members proceeded to vote for trustees. Accordingly from the result of which election it appeared on receiving the votes that James Lighthall, Isaac Johnson, Darcy Joyce, Martin Frank and Amariah Chapin were elected to serve as trustees by a plurality of voices.

"Wherefore we do hereby certify that the said James Lighthall, Isaac Johnson, Darcy Joyce, Martin Frank and Amariah Chapin have been duly elected trustees as aforesaid and that they and their successors shall forever hereafter be called and known by the name of the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady. In witness whereof we have hereunto put our hands and seals the twenty-sixth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and eight.

MORDECAI AIKIN
DARCY JOYCE

Sealed and delivered in the presence of

SIMON A. GROOT

ADM. VAN SLYCK

(A true copy)

"STATE OF NEW YORK, I, Joseph C. Yates, one of the justices of the Supreme Court of Judicature of said state do certify that on the fifth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eight personally appeared before me Mordecai Aikin and Darcy Joyce to me known who severally acknowledge to have executed the preceding instrument or certificate as their free and voluntary acts and deeds and on perusing the same and finding no alteration therein do allow the same to be recorded.

JOSEPH C. YATES

(A true copy)

"Recorded in the clerk's office of the City and County of Albany in Book No. 1 of the Registry of Church Certificates, Folio 101, on the 6th day of September, 1808.

JAMES I. WYNKOOP, Dep. Clr.

(A true copy of the original)"

III

*Giving the Record of the Second Incorporation of this Church
in the Clerk's Office of the County of Schenectady, June 17th,
1819.*

"Be it known that in pursuance of the statute in such case made and provided by the Legislature of the State of New York for the incorporation of religious societies, the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady met on the eighth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, at their church meeting-house in said city pursuant to publick notice given according to law to the congregation attending the said place of worship by the Rev. William Thatcher, minister of said church, of an election to be held for the choosing of trustees to take the charge of the estate and property belonging to said church and to transact all affairs relative to the temporalities thereof, of the time when and place where, the said election should be held. We the subscribers, members of said church, were nominated by a majority of the members present to preside at the aforesaid election and that by a majority of votes then and there taken the following persons were elected by a plurality of votes to serve as trustees for the said church, viz., John H. Youngs, Cornelius L. Barhydt, John N. Vrooman, Abraham S. Groot and Stephen L. Stillman. Wherefore we do hereby certify that the said John H. Youngs, Cornelius L. Barhydt, John N. Vrooman, Abraham S. Groot and Stephen L. Stillman have been duly elected trustees as aforesaid and denominated themselves the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady. In witness whereof we have hereunto put our hands and seals, the seventeenth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen.

JOHN N. VROOMAN
S. L. STILLMAN

Sealed and delivered

in the presence of DANIEL CHANDLER
EVERT FREAR

(A copy taken from the original)

"COUNTY OF SCHENECTADY I, Simon A. Groot, one of the judges of the common pleas of said County, do certify that on the seventeenth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, personally appeared before me John N. Vrooman and Stephen L. Stillman to me known who severally acknowledged to have executed the within instrument or certificate as their free and voluntary acts and deeds on perusing the same and finding no material alterations therein do allow the same to be recorded.

SIMON A. GROOT, one of the judges of the court of common pleas in and for the County of Schenectady.

Recorded in the clerk's office of the County of Schenectady, in Liber A church records, pages 13 etc June 17th, 1819, at 5 o'clock P M.

JELLES A. FONDA

Clerk

(A copy taken from the original)"

IV

Giving a copy of an Act to change the name of this church. Bill introduced in the Legislature by Assemblyman Miles R. Frisbie, January 24th, 1907; passed the Assembly January 28th; passed the Senate, January 30th; signed by Governor Charles E. Hughes and became law, February 8th; and is chapter 8 of the Laws of 1907.

"An ACT to change the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady, to the First Methodist Episcopal Church of the City of Schenectady, New York.

The people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1.—The name of the "Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Schenectady," a religious corporation, is hereby changed to "First Methodist Episcopal Church of the City of Schenectady, New York," and as such shall enjoy and exercise all the rights and powers it has heretofore possessed.

Section 2.—Nothing herein contained shall in any way impair or affect any contract, liability, obligation or duty of said religious corporation, made, entered into, or incurred before the passage of this act, with or to any person or persons, firm or firms, corporation or corporations, with or to said religious corporation, or any proceedings instituted, or that may be instituted to enforce any contract, obligation, liability, or duty in favor or against said religious corporation; but any and all such contracts, obligations, liabilities, duties and proceedings shall be, and remain valid and binding in all respects to the same extent, and liable to be enforced by and against said religious corporation by the name of the "First Methodist Episcopal Church of the City of Schenectady, New York," in the same manner as if the alteration contained in said act had not been made.

Section 3.—This act shall take effect immediately.

V

*Showing the Conference and District relations of this church,
with a chronological list of its Presiding Elders, 1807-1907.*

Name of Presiding Elder	Term of Office	Name of District	Name of Conference
William Anson.....	1807	Ashgrove.	New York
Henry Stead.....	1808-1810	Albany....	"
Daniel Ostrander.....	1811-1814	Hudson River..	"
Peter P. Sandford.....	1815-1818	"	"
Eben Smith.....	1819-1820	"	"
Daniel Ostrander.....	1821-1822	Saratoga.....	"
Eben Smith.....	1823-1825	"	"
John B. Stratton.....	1826-1829	"	"
Henry Stead.....	1830-1833	"	² Troy Conference
Sherman Minor.....	1834-1837	¹ Albany	"
Charles Sherman.....	1838-1841	"	"
Ephraim Goss.....	1842-1845	"	"
John Lindsay	1846-1849	"	"
John Clark.....	1850, 1851	"	"
Truman Seymour.....	1852-1855	"	"
Henry L. Starks.....	1856-1859	"	"
William Griffin.....	1860-1863	"	"
Rodman H. Robinson.....	1864-1867	"	"
Samuel Meredith.....	1868-1871	"	"
Chester F. Burdick.....	1872-1875	"	"
Homer Eaton.....	1876-1879	"	"
James E. C. Sawyer.....	1880-1883	"	"
David W. Gates.....	1884-1887	"	"
Joel W. Eaton.....	1888-1893	"	"
John H. Coleman.....	1894-1899	"	"
Edwin P. Stevens.....	1900-1905	"	"
Irving D. Van Valkenburgh.....	1906-	"	"

¹From 1835.

²Organized, 1832.

VI

Showing the membership of Schenectady Circuit from 1807 to 1816, and the membership of this church from 1817 to 1907.

Year	Mem-bers	Proba-tioners	Year	Mem-bers	Proba-tioners	Year	Mem-bers	Proba-tioners
1808	178		1841	460		1874	440	59
1809	248		1842	375		1875	460	24
1810	458		1843	704		1876	439	104
1811	514		1844	520		1877	511	74
1812	(1) 438		1845	463		1878	475	13
1813	436		1846	357		1879	450	25
1814	391		1847	320		1880	456	10
1815	429		1848	312		1881	434	35
1816	406		1849	285	(3) 40	1882	468	34
1817	(2) 60		1850	225	25	1883	500	150
1818	54		1851	250	10	1884	620	30
1819	126		1852	207	103	1885	550	50
1820	104		1853	310	19	1886	600	40
1821	153		1854	295	15	1887	576	35
1822	143		1855	280	35	1888	600	20
1823	171		1856	285	8	1889	712	94
1824	179		1857	252	7	1890	753	50
1825	181		1858	240	120	1891	704	16
1826	176		1859	336	24	1892	723	10
1827	160		1860	337	27	1893	753	50
1828	175		1861	340	26	1894	742	19
1829	157		1862	348	9	1895	773	44
1830	174		1863	311	6	1896	705	15
1831	150		1864	290	55	1897	772	12
1832	140		1865	309	34	1898	773	7
1833	243		1866	317	16	1899	820	205
1834	235		1867	312	41	1900	(4) 965	12
1835	228		1868	326	5	1901	1,030	14
1836	195		1869	360	43	1902	1,015	16
1837	300		1870	340	12	1903	1,130	63
1838	320		1871	358	124	1904	1,189	64
1839	400		1872	415	16	1905	1,202	120
1840	593		1873	418	10	1906	1,337	63
						1907	1,305	50

¹ It will be noticed that there was a great fluctuation in the number of members throughout the Circuit period, many were constantly withdrawing and joining other churches; others, of course, fell away from all Christian profession. The gradual decrease from 514 in 1811 to 391 in 1814, however, was largely due, no doubt, to the baneful effects of the war of 1812.

² This was the first year of our church's existence as a separate station. The 406 reported the previous year included the membership of the entire circuit, embracing twenty-five, or more, preaching appointments.

³ The number of probationers first appears in the Conference Minutes for 1849.

⁴ See page 96, Note 2.

VII

Containing a chronological list of preachers in charge of this church, 1807-1907, giving date of, (1), Birth; (2), Admission to Conference; (3), Appointment to this church; (4), Their age at that time; (5), Date of Termination of Conference Relations—by Death, indicated after date by d; by Location l; by Withdrawal, w; by Transfer, t; by Expulsion, e. In cases where no date or letter is found, the reader will understand that information could not be obtained.

Name	Born	Received into Conference	Appointed to this Church	Age at That Time	Termination of Conference Relations
(Braces indicate colleague pastorate)					
Samuel Howe.....	1781	1802	1807	26	1858
Seth Crowell.....	1781	1801	1808	27	1826 d
{ Truman Bishop.....	.....	1798	1809	.....	1828 l
Datus Ensign.....	1783	1804	1809	26	1853 d
Isaac B. Smith.....	.....	1807	1810	.....	1828 w
Cyprian H. Gridley.....	1787	1808	1810	23	1872 d
Henry Stead.....	1774	1804	1811	37	1854 d
Samuel Merwin.....	1777	1800	1811	34	1839 d
Henry Stead.....	1774	1804	1812	38	1854 d
John Finnegan.....	1767	1795	1812	45	1838 d
Smith Arnold.....	1766	1800	1813	47	1839 d
John B. Matthias.....	1767	1811	1813	46	1848 d
John Kline.....	.....	1807	1814	.....	1817 l
Samuel Eighmey.....	1789	1814	1814	25	1847 d
Elisha P. Jacob.....	.....	1812	1815	.....	1830 l
Eli Barnett.....	.....	1814	1815	.....	1830 l
James Young.....	1785	1815	1815	30	1850 d
Laban Clark.....	1778	1801	1816	38	1868 d
William Thatcher.....	1769	1797	1818	51	1856 d
Samuel Luckey.....	1791	1811	1820	29	1869 d
James M. Smith.....	.....	1804	1822	.....	1827 l
Daniel Brayton.....	.....	1814	1825	.....	1843 l
George Coles.....	1792	1819	1826	34	1858 d
Buell Goodsell.....	1793	1814	1828	35	1863 d
Coles Carpenter.....	1784	1809	1830	46	1834 d
Salmon Stebbins.....	.....	1822	1832	.....	1848 l
James B. Houghtaling.....	1797	1828	1833	36	1857 d
Truman Seymour.....	1799	1829	1835	36	1874 d
Noah Levings.....	1796	1818	1836	40	1848 d
Ephraim Goss.....	1794	1829	1838	44	1866 d
Stephen Remington.....	.....	.....	1840	.....	1843 t
John Harwood.....	.....	1834	1842	.....	1853 d
Andrew Witherspoon.....	1808	1833	1844	36	1885 d
James Rawson.....	.....	1841	1845	.....	1849 d w
John Frazer.....	1803	1831	1847	44	1855 t
Allen Steele.....	1808	1845	1849	41	1850 d
Barnes M. Hall.....	1803	1834	1850	47	1886 d
Henry L. Starks.....	1801	1834	1852	51	1882 d
Merritt Bates.....	1806	1827	1854	48	1869 d
Joseph K. Cheesman.....	1817	1846	1856	39	1895 d
Samuel McLean.....	1820	1852	1858	32	.....
Henry L. Starks.....	1801	1834	1860	59	1882 d
Joseph K. Cheesman.....	1817	1846	1862	45	1895 d
Andrew J. Jutkins.....	1829	1854	1864	35	1867 t
Frederick Widmer.....	1835	1860	1867	32	1891 d
Joel W. Eaton.....	1831	1857	1869	38	.....
David W. Gates.....	.....	1862	1872	.....	.....
George J. Brown.....	1839	1868	1875	36	1880 d
William J. Heath.....	.....	1857	1877	.....	1886 t
William H. Hughes.....	1839	1863	1880	41	.....
George A. Barrett.....	1845	1876	1883	38	1902 d
William H. Hughes.....	1839	1863	1886	47	.....
Charles D. Hills.....	1836	1865	1888	52	1891 t
Charles V. Grismer.....	1852	1880	1891	39	.....
Henry Graham.....	1841	1869	1896	55	.....
Francis T. Brown.....	1860	1896	1900	31	1902 t
Fred Winslow Adams.....	1866	1896	1902	36	.....

VIIID

*Showing the Officers of this Church, correct to November 1st,
1907*

TRUSTEES

J. B. GRAHAM C. W. BAILEY L. DEF. GATES
H. R. HEGEMAN B. H. RIPTON GEORGE GIBSON
C. F. RANKIN WM. DALTON J. E. FELTHOUSEN

STEWARDS

A. M. VEDDER	CHAS. MACCULLOCH	L. B. EDWARDS
F G. KING	J. B. PACKER	A. H. BURDICK
O. H. LANDRETH	L. P. WOOD	CHAS. S. SMITH
B. R. HATMAKER	E. L. FRONK	A. G. LINDLEY
W W GODDARD	J. R. BOWMAN	BERT SECOR
JAMES SPROAT	C. W BROWN	OLNEY REDMOND

CLASS LEADERS

S. T. CLOSSON R. N. RAMSEY E. N. COOK
MARVIN DOUGHTY CHARLES HYSON JAMES RAUT
W. W. DUTTON GEO. C. ROWELL EDWARD SMITH

President Epworth League.....	BURTON H. DELACK
Superintendent Sunday School.	GEORGE E. MAYER
President Ladies' Aid Society....	MRS. W. C. KITCHIN
President Captain Thomas Webb Club..	PROF. JOHN I. BENNETT
President Cokesbury Circle.	MISS BELLE HANSON GATES
President Woman's Home Missionary Society.	..
.....	MRS. WELTON STANFORD, JR.
President Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
.....	DR. EMMA WING THOMPSON

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Vice-President	B. H. RIPTON
Secretary	JOHN R. BOWMAN
Treasurer	LANSING DEF. GATES
Financial Secretary	J. B. PACKER
Assistant Financial Secretary	H. R. HEGEMAN

